

Thaddeus is a wonderful example of the many talented students in my district. I look forward to celebrating many more of this bright young man's accomplishments in the future.

Congratulations, Thaddeus. I wish you the best of luck as you continue your education studying Mechanical Engineering.

**YASMIN VAFA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
RIGHTS4GIRLS—LOIS
HAIGHT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION**

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus (VRC) is a proven and effective leader in advocating for crime victims. JIM COSTA (D-CA) and I founded the VRC 10 years ago when we were first elected to Congress. During its 10-year existence, the VRC has taken the lead in protecting programs that provide critical support for victim services throughout the nation, including the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPA). Each year the members of the caucus join together to honor outstanding individuals who have given their time and service to helping victims. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Caucus.

The Lois Haight Award for Excellence and Innovation pays tribute to California Judge Lois Haight. She was the Chair of President Ronald Reagan's 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime. Judge Haight led pioneering efforts on behalf of crime victims that resulted in significant public policy advances to promote crime victims' rights and services. The honoree who receives this award is a professional whose efforts have had a significant impact on local, state, national or international public policy development and implementation that promote dignity, respect, rights and services for victims of crime.

Yasmin Vafa embodies the vision, drive and accomplishment of Judge Haight. She is the co-founder and Executive Director of Rights4Girls, a human rights organization focused on gender-based violence against young women and girls in the U.S. As the award recipient that my office nominated I am proud to recognize her significant contributions in advocating for Victims' Rights. She is a fearless fighter against injustice, educating not only my office, but offices across the Capitol about the scourge of human trafficking—especially on the unique needs of domestic victims and the need to prosecute buyers.

The voice of survivors like "T" Ortiz Walker Pettigrew that Yasmin and Rights for Girls brings to the Hill changes the conversation on human trafficking. Yasmin knows and works with these survivors both in DC and around the country through advocacy, trainings, and survivor retreats, and won't stop until victims are treated as victims and we put all the bad guys where they belong.

Yasmin's principled passion, activism and persistence have been critical in the passage of a number of bills to fight human trafficking and protect vulnerable women and girls. One bill especially close to my heart, which would

not have crossed the finish line without her help is the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Yasmin helped conceive, advocate and fight for the bill through ups and downs until the right thing was done and the bill became law. In addition to the incredible accomplishments she's had for victims of crime on Capitol Hill, she has also designed and implemented a national judicial institute on child trafficking, co-authored a seminal report mapping girls' unique pathways into the juvenile justice system: The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story.

She also currently serves as a faculty adjunct educator and consultant for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, served on the Advisory Board for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's National Girls Initiative, and was as a member of the Department of Justice's National Task Force on the Use of Restraints with Pregnant Women and Girls under Correctional Custody. Yasmin is so deserving of the Lois Haight Award for Excellence and Innovation Award, we are grateful for her persistence and passion.

And that is just the way it is.

**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF FUTURE
SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGISTS—MARIA BENNETT**

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Maria Bennett from Katy, TX for being accepted into the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists to represent the state of Texas at the Congress of Future Science and Technology leaders.

Maria attends Cinco Ranch High School and is one of 13 high school honor students selected from the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas. These students were selected as Texas delegates at the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders. This program was designed for high school students to be recognized for their hard work in school, as well as to support their aspirations of working in a science or technology field. The National Academy was founded by Richard Rossi and Dr. Robert Darling; Mr. Rossi currently serves as president. The Congress is being held at the Tsongas Center at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell from June 29th through July 1st. Maria was selected by a group of educators to be a delegate for the Congress thanks to her dedication to her academic success and goals of pursuing science or technology. We are proud of Maria and all of her hard work, and know she will make Katy proud.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Maria for being accepted into the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists. Keep up the great work.

HONORING MR. HAROLD WARD, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Unsung Hero, Mr. Harold Ward, Jr. a resident of Winstonville, Mississippi.

Harold Ward, Jr. was born and raised in the small town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where he graduated from John F. Kennedy Memorial High School in 1999. After graduating from high school, Harold attended Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, Mississippi, and Mississippi Valley State University in Itta Bena, Mississippi. Harold is a member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Mound Bayou. He is the son of Judge Harold Ward Sr. and Patricia White-Ward; the youngest of four children: Ms. Chauncila M. Ward (deceased), Dr. Kendria Ward, and Attorney Yumekia Ward; the grandson of the late Napoleon White Sr. and Mrs. Earline J. Hill, Reverend Henry Ward and Mrs. Lola Ward.

Mr. Ward was born with sickle cell disease. At the age of 25, Harold's oldest sister, Chauncila, passed away from complications of sickle cell disease. Sickle Cell Disease is an inherited blood disorder that affects nearly 100,000 Americans. Sickle Cell Disease causes red blood cells to form into crescent shapes like sickles that cuts off the oxygen supply to the blood causing excruciating pain. Even though Mr. Ward suffers from this debilitating disease, he does not allow it to completely make him bedridden and on his good days he does volunteer work.

Always unselfish with his time and immensely involved with community service activities in the City of Mound Bayou and the town of Winstonville, Mississippi, Mr. Ward has been a constant inspiration to others.

In 2007, he began volunteering his services at Delta Health Center in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where he assisted nurses with triage patients, filing documents, and read Christmas stories to patients' children. He also aided in the recruitment of patients to the facility by going door to door informing people of the services available at Delta Health Center. In 2014, Mr. Ward was lead sales representative with Humana and guided qualified individuals through the sign-up process for Obamacare.

Mr. Ward reorganized the town of Winstonville Volunteer Fire Department where he currently serves as Fire Chief. He encouraged people in the community between the ages of 21–35 to volunteer their services to the town by becoming a volunteer fire fighter.

On February 22, 2015, he received an award from Chi Mu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, in recognition for his outstanding contributions and dedicated services in the field of health.

Mr. Ward compassionately volunteers with the City of Mound Bayou serving as assistant to Mayor Darryl Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this amazing Unsung Hero.

CONGRATULATING COURTNEY
ELTRINGHAM ON RECEIVING THE
BRIGHTON ASSEMBLY OF GOD'S
GOLD MEDAL AWARD

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Courtney Eltringham, who was recently honored with the Brighton Assembly of God's Gold Medal Award, the highest achievement in the Assemblies of God Girls Ministries program.

To be honored with the Brighton Assembly of God's Gold Medal is the culmination of a 13 year journey of devotion to God that begins in kindergarten and finishes at the end of high school. The Girls Ministries program strives to instill Christian values and virtues in the young women who will be the future of our nation.

To be honored with a gold medal, girls must go above and beyond the requirements for completing the five levels of clubs offered by the ministries. Medal awardees must also have read the Bible twice, the New Testament three times, memorized portions of scripture and have met weekly with a sponsor who helps to guide them spiritually.

Mr. Speaker, Courtney Eltringham has not only displayed an uncommon level of spiritual devotion during her time in the Girls Ministries program, but also a measure of determination and commitment that will undoubtedly serve her well through her life. On behalf of Missouri's Seventh Congressional District, I urge my colleagues in congratulating her on this well-earned achievement.

TRIBUTE TO WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the West Central Community Action of Harlan, Iowa for 50 years of service to southwest Iowa. The 50th anniversary is a testament to the great work performed daily by the staff professionals at the West Central Community Action Agency.

Established 50 years ago, West Central Community Action provides program services to low-income families and individuals in ten southwest Iowa counties (Cass, Crawford, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby). The mission of West Central Community Action is "empowering families and individuals to achieve their highest potential." During 2015, the agency received grant revenues of over \$17 million to provide services to 7,203 families and 17,206 individuals. The agency has 200 employees which provides work experience and training opportunities to 70 senior aide participants. West Central focuses on assisting low-income families and individuals to acquire useful skills and while gaining access to new opportunities to have economic self-sufficiency.

I commend West Central Community Action of Southwest Iowa and its staff for providing

dedicated, committed and crucial services to families and individuals. There is great work being accomplished every day at West Central Community Action. I urge my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating West Central Community Action for achieving 50 years of service. I wish them and all of the staff continued success in the future.

MAUREEN MAHONEY—EVA MURILLO UNSUNG HERO AWARD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus (VRC) advocates for crime victims. JIM COSTA (CA) and I founded the VRC 10 years ago when we were first elected to Congress. During its 10 year existence, the VRC has taken the lead in protecting programs that provide critical support for victim services throughout the nation, including the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPPRA). Each year the members of the caucus join together to honor outstanding individuals who have given their time and service to helping victims. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Caucus.

On behalf of Congressman COSTA and myself, we are proud to honor Maureen Mahoney with the Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award. Nominated by Congressman SETH MOULTON, Maureen is recognized for her efforts in preventing domestic violence. This award is named for Eva Murillo—an individual who cared deeply about advocating for victims and survivors of violent crime. Each year, an award bearing Eva Murillo's name recognizes an individual—or pair of individuals—who utilized his or her experiences to triumph over personal tragedy and raise awareness for the needs of crime victims.

Maureen tragically lost her parents, Dr. Hugh and Ruth Mahoney, and her brother John to an incident of violent crime in December 1975. On the 40th anniversary of this tragedy, Maureen and her family organized a community event in Tewksbury, Massachusetts to celebrate and honor the lives of their parents and brother. This event tribute was dedicated to addressing domestic violence, as Maureen recognized that violent criminals are often impacted by domestic violence situations in their youth.

Maureen donated all of the money raised at the event to local organizations in the Tewksbury area, including the Center for Hope and Healing, The Michael B. Christensen Community and Family Support Center, The United Teen Equality Center, and the Tewksbury Police Department. Maureen's own experiences translate in her work as a life coach, where she works with survivors of tragedy like herself. I am proud to recognize her efforts today with the Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award.

And that is just the way it is.

CLAIRE LEFEVERS EARNS GIRL
SCOUTS GOLD AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Claire LeFevers for earning the prestigious Girl Scouts Gold Award, their highest honor.

Claire is a senior at St. Thomas Episcopal School in Sugar Land, Texas. Her extraordinary community service project that earned her the Girl Scouts Gold Award consisted of a group effort, led by Claire, to fix up the outer grounds of a Care Center, located in Schulenburg, Texas. There, the service group built outside furniture and brought decorative potted plants. In addition to this project, Claire also worked with outside organizations in the community, in efforts to provide the Care Center with necessary materials for their residents. Through her hard work, Claire's group directly helped 70 people. The Gold Award is administered to less than five percent of high school aged scouts who exemplify incredible leadership measures through practical, yet impactful projects. We are so proud of Claire, and we thank her for graciously serving her community.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Claire LeFevers for receiving the Girl Scouts Gold Award.

HONORING JERUSALEM OUTREACH
CHILD & ADULT LEARNING
CENTER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Jerusalem Outreach Child and Adult Learning Center in Charleston, MS. It is locally referred to as JOCI (Jerusalem Outreach Center Incorporated).

JOCI was established as a nonprofit organization in the year 2000. JOCI was one of the partners in a county wide effort to provide service to citizens living in hard to reach and underserved communities in Tallahatchie County like Paynes and Glendora. JOCI's goal is to meet the educational and health and social welfare needs of both children and adults regardless of race. Their partner Glendora Economic and Community Development Corporation (GECDCo) focused on the development needs of the communities like housing, recreation, jobs, and more.

In order to achieve the above goals JOCI hosts health fairs and provides a long list of services. The services include, but are not limited to: personal counseling, referrals to outside resources, depending on the issue; social therapy for special needs clients; child care; after school care and services; educational classes; tutoring; and more. Since 2000, JOCI's record of achievement has attracted new partners to their effort: Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute, Quality Stars, the Department of Human Services,