

cadet the next year. He earned his military wings after nine months of training, in March 1943 as a second lieutenant. In his 89 missions as a fighter pilot and as part of the 100th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group he flew over France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Romania, Greece, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.

It was in 1944 during a strafing mission over Lake Balaton in Romania that he took flak from German anti-aircraft artillery, ultimately parachuting to the ground before being turned over by local farmers to the German military. He was transferred to Stalag Luft III, a prisoner of war camp specifically designated for airmen. He was liberated from the camp along with all other prisoners in May 1945.

Lt. Col. McCreary returned home from his time as a prisoner of war in Germany and continued his service within the armed forces for nearly two more decades. His commitment and the historic contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen in the face of institutionalized discrimination were recognized in 2007 with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me once more in recognizing the extraordinary contributions of Lt. Col. Walter McCreary.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on January 6, 2016, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On roll call no. 2, 3, 4 and 5, I would have voted YES.

On January 7, 2016, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On roll call no. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, I would have voted NO. On roll call no. 12 and 20, I would have voted YES.

On January 8, 2016, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On roll call no. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32, I would have voted NO. On roll call no. 21, 22 and 33, I would have voted YES.

On January 11, 2016, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On roll call no. 34 and 35, I would have voted YES.

#### RECOGNIZING MRS. ISABEL OPORT NEIDIG

#### HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Isabel Oport Neidig. On February 5, Mrs. Neidig will celebrate her 100th birthday.

Born in Morelia, Mrs. Neidig saw the height of the Mexican Revolution. Her parents chose to leave Mexico shortly after her birth and moved to the United States.

At the age of 15, Mrs. Neidig moved back to Mexico where she pursued her passion for education. She taught elementary and middle school students, and played a critical role in having a high school built in Jojutla. She was the only bilingual teacher and referred to, by both students and parents, as "La Teacher". It is the hard work Mrs. Neidig embodies daily that makes America exceptional. She has shown true leadership in her profession and community.

Mrs. Neidig went on to marry Edward William Neidig and had two sons, Andres and David. She left Jojutla in 1962 for Colorado, where she still lives. On behalf of the 4th Congressional District of Colorado, I extend my best wishes to Mrs. Neidig as she celebrates her birthday.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Mrs. Neidig.

#### IN MEMORIAM DON W. STRAUCH JR. APRIL 8, 1926—JANUARY 11, 2016

#### HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Don W. Strauch Jr. (Mayor Strauch), Mayor of Mesa, AZ from 1980–1984, Mesa City Council Member from 1972–1978 and Arizona State Representative from 1987–1988. In 2003, Mayor Strauch was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame for his service in the U.S. Army during World War II, his work with the American Legion, VFW, and his contributions as a civic leader.

Mayor Strauch was instrumental in creating the Mesa that we know today. He launched the Mesa Sister Cities program and championed the proposed Mesa Arts Center; he broke down walls of discrimination and advanced civil rights throughout Mesa and Arizona. His negotiations with McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing) convinced the company to locate in Mesa. Mesa Fire and Medical is a model of efficiency and innovation today because of the groundwork that Mayor Strauch did during his time as mayor. He saw Mesa libraries as a vital community asset and worked to improve them.

Mayor Strauch's optimism, pragmatism and sincere belief in the greatness of Mesa and its citizens were always at the center of his work. He had the strength to put partisan issues aside and work with a diverse group of community partners during an important time in Mesa's growth. His humility and pragmatism are leadership examples that we can all learn from in our work as Members of Congress.

Mayor Strauch died on January 11, 2016 after complications from a fall. He leaves behind his beloved wife Chris, his partner in all things for over 66 years, his daughter Christy and a large and loving family. Members, please join me in extending condolences to Mayor Strauch's family and the City of Mesa on the inconsolable loss of this extraordinary man. Mayor Strauch will be dearly missed and fondly remembered by everyone whose life was made better because of his selfless contributions.

#### COACH JOSEPH—COACH OF THE YEAR

#### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Katy High School's head football coach, Gary Joseph, for being named MaxPreps National Football Coach of the Year.

Gary Joseph has been with Katy High School for 34 years, 22 of those years as assistant head coach and defensive coordinator and the last 12 as head coach. Coach Joseph started his coaching career at Luling High School, where he coached the Luling football program to its first district championship in over 20 years. This season, he led Katy to 16–0 and its eighth state championship. Coach Joseph's career record stands at 168–14 with 11 district titles and four state titles with the Katy Tigers. We are extremely proud of Coach Joseph and his team.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Coach Gary Joseph for all of his success and hard work.

#### HONORING THE WASKOM HIGH SCHOOL WILDCATS, 2015 3-A, DIV II TEXAS STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

#### HON. LOUIE GOHMERT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize today the great accomplishment of the Waskom Wildcats football team, a team which—for the second year in a row—has captured the title of Class 3A Division II Texas State Football Champions.

The Wildcats' winning season culminated with their thirty-first consecutive win, a stellar streak they began during their 2014 championship season. Waskom ended this 2015 season undefeated with a perfect 16–0 record.

The Waskom Wildcats were eager for a rematch with the only team to beat them in the prior season, and began their run to the title by toppling a talented team from Center with a 34–22 victory. Equally satisfying victories followed, as the Wildcats pounced on teams from all over east Texas in their quest to secure a spot in the championship.

The state championship game found the Waskom Wildcats in a tangle with the Franklin Lions. The Wildcats rallied from an early deficit to take the lead at halftime, then a drive to a second consecutive state championship with a decisive 33–21 final score.

The life lessons learned about teamwork and discipline will no doubt improve every participant in immeasurable ways.

My heartfelt congratulations are extended to Athletic Director and Head Football Coach Whitney Keeling and his staff including Coaches Jeremy Kubiak, Greg Pearson, Gary Wilson, Jeff Lyles, Vincent Lee, David Higginbotham, Matt Goode, Justin Watson, Frank Crisp, Joe Williams, and Lorenza Thomas; also, Managers Isaac Irving, Cameron

Williamson, Trey Jones, Zach Grubbs, Taylor Minatre, Lamontre Stephens, and Athletic Trainer Matt Dyson.

The players themselves who prepared diligently enduring through strains, pains, and grueling practices and emerged again as champions included Tramaine Butler, Keileon Johnson, Tay Green, Jaire Jackson, Pedro Rodriguez, Keylon Johnson, Kaleb Haynes, Eric Stephens III, Kevy Luster, Lucas Norton, Logan Hughes, Dylan Harkrider, Jason Jinks, Chan Amie, Latavius Stephens, TK Hamilton, Mike Reason, Jacob Reeves, Tramel Butler, Chris Pacheco, Kyle Mcinnis, Chris Stafford, Victor Tapia, Bryan Holland, Vicente Segura, Dalton Adams, Brighton Harris, Morgan Browning, Bradley Cochran, Dylan Powell, Logan O'Connor, Christian Smith, Xzavian Russell, Jack Smith, Josh Mauldin, Ashton Thulen, Jacob Bennett, Rowdy Martin, Cody Kyker, Kevin Sanford, Raymond Ramirez, Jacob Norris, Ty Carter, Hunter Johnson, Jay Reeves, Josh Cole, and K.T. Ceaser.

A team and its coaches cannot soar to the heights of champions without the encouragement and full support of the school itself starting at the top with Superintendent Jimmy E. Cox and Principal Kassie Watson, to whom a debt of gratitude is also owed. Additional laudatory acclaim and gratitude must also go to the entire city of Waskom which once again revealed itself to be a tight knit community of undying support for the champion Wildcats.

May God continue to bless these young people, their families, friends and all those who refer to Waskom as their home. It is a tremendous honor to congratulate the 2015 State Champion Waskom Wildcats, as their legacy is now preserved in the United States Congressional Record which will endure as long as there is a United States of America.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE FRESH START ACT

### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Fresh Start Act, a bill I reintroduced earlier today.

If enacted, it would allow certain individuals who have been convicted of nonviolent offenses, have paid their debt to society, and are now law-abiding members of the community to petition courts to have their nonviolent conviction expunged from their records.

A criminal record, even for a minor, non-violent offense, can pose a barrier to employment, education and housing opportunities—the very things necessary to start one's life over.

This is not only bad for rehabilitated offenders, it is bad for their families and for the community in which they live.

The Fresh Start Act would give nonviolent offenders a chance to start over again, a chance to become productive members of society.

The bill allows offenders to apply for expungement to the court where they were sentenced and allows the United States Attorney for that District to submit recommendations to the court. Applicants who are denied could reapply once every two years. Once

seven years have elapsed since an offender has completed their sentence, expungement would be automatically granted. However, sex offenders and those who commit crimes causing a loss of over \$25,000 would not be eligible for automatic expungement.

Finally, the bill would also encourage states to pass their own expungement laws for state offenses. States that pass a substantially similar law would receive a 5 percent increase in their Byrne funding while those that do not would lose 5 percent of their Byrne funds.

It is one thing to convict someone of a non-violent crime. It is quite another to condemn him to a de facto life sentence for it.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 2016 NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

### HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Catholic schools and parishes within Central Illinois and across the country as we celebrate National Catholic Schools Week. Parochial education holds a special place in American history as a long established alternative for parents who desire a religious component to their child's education. As part of this tradition, every year starting on the last Sunday of January, Catholic schools all across the nation celebrate Catholic Schools Week.

There are 6,568 Catholic schools in the United States including both elementary and secondary schools that serve urban, suburban and rural communities. Catholic school graduation rates are over 99 percent and of those graduating students, 85.7 percent attend college. My home state of Illinois is one of the top ten states in the country with the highest enrollment in Catholic schools and my district is home to 28 Catholic schools that will be participating in activities throughout the week.

I myself am a proud graduate of Catholic grade school, high school, and college and the religious values I learned through my Catholic education have stayed with me throughout my life. Additionally, my wife and I and our three sons are current parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul parish in Peoria and our boys attend school there. I am so thankful for my education and that America is a country where families have the freedom and choice to send their children to a Catholic or other parochial school.

This year's theme for Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." Students, teachers, parishioners, and clergy from across America will celebrate together as a community, recognizing God's mission through the pillars of faith, knowledge and service, as well as promoting the Church's values of volunteering, vocations and family. During National Catholic Schools Week, I am pleased to highlight the Catholic educational system and look forward to many more years of continued success and celebration.

#### FORT BEND PROMISE CEMENTS ITS COMMITMENT

### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Fort Bend Promise Center on building a new and impressive 4,000-square-foot facility to serve the homeless.

When the Fort Bend program opened 10 years ago, it was originally located at the New Hope Lutheran Church. Now, their newly opened, community-funded center is a place where families can come fulfill day to day activities and utilize available programs including counseling and support. In the last five years alone, the Fort Bend program has helped 194 families in our community. Our community is so thankful for all of the work the Fort Bend Center is doing for our neighbors in need. The compassion and dedication expressed through Fort Bend Promise defines the compassion of all Texans.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the Fort Bend Promise Center on their new facility. Thank you for providing support to the lives of so many families here in Fort Bend County.

#### TRIBUTE TO THOMAS ANTHONY THOMAS

### HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 1, 2016*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Lake Elsinore, California are exceptional. On Saturday, January 23, 2016, Tom Thomas received the Citizen of the Year award from the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

Tom was born and raised just over the Cleveland National Forest in Orange County, where he graduated from Newport Harbor High School. After high school, Tom earned his Associate Degree from Orange Coast College and then attended Cal-State Fullerton before he became interested in working at the TV studios of Newport Cablevision. That job was the start of a lifelong attraction to the cable television business and a career that would take Tom to Alaska, New York and all around the country. Tom eventually planted his roots in Lake Elsinore and ended up living at the "ranch" on the Ortega's along with his wife, Dee. Tom and Dee have been married for 33 years and their adult son, Matt, currently resides in Sacramento.

In Lake Elsinore, Tom dedicated himself to the community by serving multiple years on the Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce Board, including two terms as President, as well as almost 15 years with the Lake Elsinore Rotary Club, where he also served twice as President. Tom has served on the Lake Elsinore Unified School District Board of Trustees since 2004 and as Executive Director of Cops for Kids at the Lake Elsinore Sheriff's station. In recognition of his selfless service to his community, Tom has been recognized with