

the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened."

A decade prior to the irregular ratification of the 27th Amendment, one of my constituents, Gregory Watson, was a 19-year-old student at the University of Texas at Austin tasked with writing a term paper for a course in American Government. Through his research, Watson stumbled upon a still-pending proposed constitutional amendment that the First Congress had offered in 1789, pursuant to Article V, to the State legislatures for ratification pertaining to the compensation of Members of Congress. Despite the intriguing nature and depth of research of his paper, Watson earned a grade of "C" on it, and in the class overall. That grade stood for 35 years until May 2017 when the overall course grade was officially raised to an "A" by UT—Austin upon formal petition of Watson's former professor.

Unfazed at the time by the original low grade on his paper, Watson began in the Spring of 1982 reaching out to seek sponsorship of the proposed constitutional amendment in state capitols across the United States. In 1983, the Maine Legislature became Watson's first success story. After that, in 1984, Colorado's lawmakers gave their approval at Watson's urging. And from that point forward—with Watson pressing every step of the way—the proposal's momentum strengthened until it officially became the 27th Amendment to the Constitution on May 5, 1992, when the Alabama Legislature approved it, just over 10 years after Watson first learned of it. Later that month, both Houses of the 102nd Congress voted to accept the 27th Amendment's unorthodox path to final ratification.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the story of a determined student should serve as a reminder of how much influence average citizens can have if they will step up and get involved in the political process.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill I introduced earlier today: the Equal Employment for All Act. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate today by Senator ELIZABETH WARREN.

According to a recent report, an increasing number of employers have been using credit reports, specifically consumer reports bearing on the consumer's creditworthiness, credit standing or credit capacity, as part of their hiring process. However, unless the job position involves significant financial responsibility, the use of a credit check for employment raises the obvious issue that a person's credit history has little to do with his or her qualifications for a job.

Far too often, employers turn down "credit challenged" applicants because they have erroneously linked credit scores to potential job performance. Even worse, the "credit challenged" have fallen victim to deceptive marketing practices by credit report companies or credit counseling services that charge outlandish fees that supposedly rehabilitate credit scores to help with employment.

The Equal Employment for All Act would right this wrong by amending the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prohibit the use of consumer credit checks by employers as part of the hiring or firing process unless the job involves national security, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation clearance, or significant financial responsibility.

With the passage of the Equal Employment for All Act, some of our most vulnerable, "credit challenged" citizens including students, recent college graduates, low-income families, senior citizens, and minorities, would be given the opportunity to begin rebuilding their credit by obtaining a job.

I also want to thank Senator WARREN for her leadership and partnership on this important piece of legislation.

I urge my colleagues to help pass this bill.

IN HONOR OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important milestone in my district on the central coast of California. This weekend will mark twenty-five years since the establishment of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Referred to by many as the Serengeti of the Sea, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration designated the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 1992. Twenty-five years later, thanks in large part to this designation, the central coast of California has become a vibrant international tourist destination. Millions of people from all over the world now travel to my district to enjoy the pristine natural beauty of this Sanctuary, creating not only cherished memories for visitors, but also thousands of jobs for local residents. Among these destinations is the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a world-renowned aquarium where thousands of visitors every year learn about the rare and diverse ecosystems that thrive within the giant kelp forests of the Sanctuary.

While several generations on the central coast of California have always known the Monterey Bay to be a place of protected natural beauty, a sanctuary designation was a long-delayed dream for many. While a Marine Sanctuaries Study Bill was first proposed in 1967, it was not until the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 that the Environmental Protection Agency was authorized by Congress to regulate commercial activities in offshore areas. Thus, Congress delegated power to the Executive Branch to create federally protected marine sanctuaries. Unfortunately, despite tireless local efforts to achieve this designation for the Monterey Bay, the Reagan administration dropped the area for consideration as a sanctuary in 1983. The Congressman at the time recalled recently that when he approached then-Interior Secretary James Watt to lobby for the designation, he pointed out a picture on the wall of the room of a beautiful coastline, using it as an example of the kinds of areas worthy of conservation. Secretary Watt allegedly replied, "Looks like a good place for an oil rig."

However, this did not stop the residents of the central coast from achieving their long-held dream. In 1988, Congress voted to re-authorize the Sanctuaries Act, and the Monterey Bay was included in the bill as a proposed sanctuary. It was an important step, but much work remained to make certain that the Sanctuary would be large enough to ensure the protection of the coastline from offshore oil drilling, and other practices that would harm the delicate ecosystem within the Monterey Bay. Finally, on September 18, 1992, Congress authorized the designation of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary through legislation proposed by Congressman Leon Panetta. My father has referred to this many times as one of his proudest moments, and it certainly stands as one of his greatest accomplishments.

Of course, the thanks for the establishment of the Sanctuary should not go to just one man. Rather, it was the culmination of decades of tireless work by hundreds of citizens and public servants. Their determination preserved a living postcard to pass on to the future generations. The endless hours dedicated to this monumental achievement stand as an enduring testament to what is possible when citizens take an active role in our democracy. When Americans put their minds to something, anything is possible.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in taking a moment to recognize the value of conserving areas like the Monterey Bay. Preserving our nation's natural beauty has a long and storied tradition spanning over a century, with champions from both political parties. Let us now, then, commit ourselves to the continued preservation of our nation's public lands, now and forever.

CONGRATULATING THE ALLIANCE TO SAVE ENERGY ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of the Alliance to Save Energy on its 40th Anniversary. Founded in 1977 following the oil embargo, the Alliance has been dedicated to improving the energy efficiency of the United States. It was established by Senators Charles Percy, a Republican from Illinois, and Hubert Humphrey, a Democrat from Minnesota, reflecting the organization's deep bipartisan roots and commitment to practical approaches to policy; a philosophy that guides the Alliance's work today.

The benefits of energy efficiency are broad. Not only does using less energy save money for American families and businesses on their utility bills, it allows our nation's valuable resources to last longer and produce more for our economy. When we can power our nation with domestic resources, we don't have to rely on foreign sources and the risks that accompany them. For this reason, energy efficiency and energy security are just as intricately linked as they were in 1977.

Improving energy efficiency in federal buildings remains one of my top priorities, particularly when it can be done through common-

sense, public-private partnerships and performance contracts that save taxpayer funds. Each and every time the energy efficiency of a federal building is improved, the taxpayer wins. When the private sector is engaged and deploys its resources to make those improvements, the taxpayer wins many times over. For this reason, I am proud of my work to support Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPCs) and Utility Energy Service Contracts (UESCs), including legislation I introduced along with my friend PETER WELCH of Vermont that would lead to more investments, better leverage of public funds, and greater savings. The Alliance endorses my bipartisan legislation and I am thankful for their support.

Again, congratulations to the Alliance on reaching its 40th Anniversary. It is truly an honor to serve on this organization's Honorary Board, along with my colleagues PETER WELCH of Vermont, MICHAEL BURGESS of Texas, DAVID MCKINLEY of West Virginia, DAVE REICHERT of Washington, and PAUL TONKO of New York, as well as several Senate colleagues. As a group, I believe we truly represent the diversity of opinions on energy issues in Congress, but we also represent the Alliance's strong commitment to bipartisanship. We've come a long way on federal energy efficiency policy, and I look forward to what can be accomplished over the next 40 years.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM J. "BILL" HOWELL

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize William J. "Bill" Howell for 30 years of distinguished public service to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mr. Howell served in the Virginia General Assembly since 1988, and presided over the chamber as Speaker of the House of Delegates since 2003. During his tenure, Speaker Howell championed the issues important to his constituents of Stafford and Fredericksburg and on behalf of all Virginians. As the second longest serving Speaker in the House of Delegates, Mr. Howell embodied the characteristics of a true Virginia Statesmen.

Among other issues, Mr. Howell will be remembered for reforming the Virginia Retirement System and leading the first transportation funding overhaul in 27 years. Speaker Howell recognized the importance of the Chesapeake Bay and was a strong advocate for historical preservation and conservation efforts. Under Speaker Howell, Virginia's Rainy Day Fund is on track to exceed \$1 billion by the end of the next budget cycle. In 2013, Speaker Howell was named "Legislator of the Year" by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and one of Governing Magazine's 2013 Public Officials of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Speaker Bill Howell on his dedication to serving the Commonwealth of Virginia and wishing him best wishes in his future endeavors.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I held a hearing on the future of democracy and governance in Liberia. Of the more than 50 nations of Africa, the United States has the closest connection with the Republic of Liberia. This is not only because Liberia was founded in 1847 by freedmen and former slaves from this country, but also because of the estimated 500,000 Liberians and Liberian descendants who live here. Many Liberians consider the United States the "mother country" even though it was never a U.S. colony. Liberian cities such as Monrovia and Buchanan were named for American presidents.

However, most Americans are largely unaware of the long link between the United States and Liberia and likely see Liberia as just another African country. Most Americans are unaware that Liberia has been a major U.S. ally since World War II and into the Cold War, hosting U.S. communications facilities in the 1960s and 1970s and receiving extensive U.S. development assistance, including post-war aid and post-Ebola aid to Liberia. The United States also helped Liberia build its criminal justice sector and supported transitional justice efforts.

The United States has funded just over a quarter of the cost of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), at a cost of \$106 million annually as of FY 2016. Liberia is also implementing a \$256.7 million, five-year MCC compact, signed in 2015, designed to increase access to reliable, affordable electricity and enhance the country's poor road infrastructure. Bilateral State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) assistance totaled \$91 million in FY2016.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made some advancement in democracy and governance during her two terms, following the despotic rule of Charles Taylor. During his term of office, Taylor was accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity as a result of his involvement in the Sierra Leone civil war from 1991 to 2002, but he also was responsible for serious human rights violations in Liberia. Taylor was formally indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2003. He resigned and went into exile in Nigeria. In 2006, then-newly elected President Sirleaf formally requested his extradition. He was detained by UN authorities in Sierra Leone and then at the Penitentiary Institution Haaglanden in The Hague, awaiting trial by the Special Court. He was found guilty in April 2012 of all eleven charges levied by the Special Court, including terror, murder and rape, and in May 2012, Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison.

The United States occasionally arrested alleged perpetrators of civil war human rights abuses, often using immigration perjury charges as a vehicle for prosecution. One of them was Charles McArthur Emmanuel, also known as Chuckie Taylor, the son of Charles Taylor. Raised in Florida, Emmanuel became the commander of the infamously violent Anti-Terrorist Unit, commonly known in Liberia as the "Demon Forces." He is currently serving a

97-year sentence back in Florida for his role in human rights violations carried out by the ATU.

President Sirleaf was unable under the constitution to run for a third term but unlike other African leaders, she did not push to change the constitution to allow a third term. We don't yet know whether her successors can or will continue an upward trend. Most candidates for President have highlighted corruption, but these candidates have platforms that are light on policy specifics. Consequently, my subcommittee's hearing this week was intended to examine the prospects for democracy and governance in Liberia following the October elections.

The United States is a key provider of technical assistance to Liberia's National Election Commission, including an International Foundation for Electoral Systems program, funded by USAID, and the U.N. Development Program, backed by nearly \$12 million in mostly European Union funding under a multifaceted project from 2015 to 2018. The Election Commission also receives broader institutional capacity building support under a second \$4 million USAID-funded program, the Liberian Administrative and System Strengthening.

Our government has a significant investment in Liberia on several fronts. The future direction of this country is important to the United States. Therefore, we have a stake in the next Liberian government building on advances made in democracy and governance under the current government and must continue to provide assistance to that end and insist on no backsliding as we see in far too many countries in Africa today.

Most of all, there must be much more done to minimize the impact of corruption in Liberia, which not only robs the people of the benefits of their country's resources and labor, but also discourages foreign investment that could provide a needed boost to development.

October's election will tell a lot about where Liberia is going, and we need to keep a close watch on developments in this important African ally.

HONORING TOM DRAPER

HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate the remarkable life of Delaware icon, Thomas H. Draper. Tom grew up in Milton, Delaware and spent his summers at the Delaware beaches. Tom went on to college at Brown University where he excelled, not only by earning his spot as captain of the 1964 Brown Bears lacrosse team, but also by being named an All-American before eventually earning admission to the Brown University Athletic Hall of Fame.

Tom returned to his home state of Delaware after college, moving back to Sussex County. He quickly purchased radio station WTHD and began his career in broadcasting. Tom would go on to purchase WBOC-TV in 1980 and helped build it into a broadcasting mainstay in "The First State."

To know Tom, however, was to know that he was so much more than his career, impressive as it was. Tom loved being outdoors and