

APPLAUDING UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF AMENDMENT TO PREVENT FEDERAL FUNDING FROM GOING TO UNSAFE CHILD CARE CENTERS

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Labor HHS Appropriations Subcommittee for accepting the amendment I introduced with Ranking Member BOBBY SCOTT earlier this week. My amendment would prevent the flow of Child Care Development Block Grants to any child care providers with a record of health and safety violations that have resulted in injury or death at their centers. This amendment was drafted following the tragic death of five-year old Kamden Johnson at an unlicensed daycare center in my home state of Alabama.

For those of you who have not heard his story, Kamden Johnson died this August after being left in a hot daycare van at the preschool he was attending. His body was found later that day dumped at the side of the road.

Kamden's story is heartbreaking. First, because a young life was cut tragically short. Secondly, Kamden's death was preventable. Due to a state exemption for religious affiliated daycare centers, Kamden's daycare center was not subject to state oversight or inspections. As a matter of fact, the driver who was responsible for Kamden when he died had an extensive criminal record.

Despite Kamden's death, and despite the failure of Kamden's daycare center to meet commonsense safety standards, the childcare provider and other unregulated childcare centers like it can be eligible today for federal grant funding. After one of their children was discovered dead by the side of the road, this daycare center can still receive Child Care Development Block Grants.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, safe childcare centers which care for their children and are subject to regular inspection are struggling to make ends meet. Just this year, available slots at Head Start Programs were cut in four counties in my district. Each of the slots cut represent one more child who will not receive an early education, or who may be forced to attend an unlicensed daycare facility that puts their health and safety at risk.

I am a believer that Congress should act to increase funding for Head Start and that funding early learning is one of the best investments we can make in our country's future. But at a time when funding for early learning is limited, it is our responsibility to ensure that federal resources are going to the best possible daycares and preschools.

As of last year, there were 943 daycare centers in Alabama exempt from basic licensing standards. Over 30 Alabama legislators have come together to support a bipartisan bill extending licensing requirements to facilities currently exempt.

Right now, we have an opportunity to ensure that not one more federal dollar goes to a daycare center like the one that Kamden died at. We have a chance for both parties to work together and ensure that federal dollars for early learning are headed to child care

centers that parents can trust meet basic health and safety standards.

My amendment is a commonsense fix following a tragedy that we cannot and should not allow to happen again. Kamden's death this August was not the first child death at an unregulated daycare center in my state, and it will not be the last so long as we continue to fund centers that violate health and safety standards. For our children, for our parents, and for kids like Kamden, I know that we can and must do better.

I am proud that Congress has taken a step in addressing this major oversight in the funding of our nation's day care centers.

There is nothing more important to me than seeing our children learn and grow, and that starts with making sure our resources for early learning are going to the right place.

REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER PATTI

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Christopher Patti, who served as the Chief Counsel for the University of California, Berkeley, and was a well-respected member of the East Bay community. Mr. Patti died as a result of a vehicle accident on August 27th.

Mr. Patti graduated from Dartmouth College in 1980, before receiving his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1983, where he also served as the editor of the Virginia Law Review.

After graduation, he clerked for Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th District, and later embarked on a career in litigation at Heller, Ehrman, White & McAuliffe in San Francisco.

After a few years as a litigation attorney, Mr. Patti changed course and left private practice for public service. In 1990, he joined the University of California (UC) system, working as an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel for the UC Office of the President from 1990 through 2010.

In 2010, he moved from the Office of the President to serve as the Chief Campus Counsel at the University's flagship campus in Berkeley. Since his appointment to this position, he distinguished himself by guiding the campus through very challenging times, and developed a reputation among his peers as someone who "represented the best of Berkeley".

Mr. Patti's commitment to public service and public education, and his career working to support the important mission that the University plays in the East Bay, and worldwide is certainly a testament to that fact.

UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ recalled of Patti that he was "extraordinary . . . and he had a deep core of integrity that motivated everything that he did".

I am grateful for Christopher Patti's service to the UC system, and the Berkeley campus in particular, and to the people of California. As a proud UC Berkeley alumna, I am tremendously saddened by this significant loss to the campus community.

Beyond his many professional accomplishments, Mr. Patti was a loving husband, and fa-

ther who is survived by his wife, Jocelyn Larkin, and two sons, Vincent and Gabriel.

Today, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I salute the life and service of Mr. Christopher Patti. I offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends, and the entire UC Berkeley community who are joined in grief at this incredible, and unfortunate loss.

HONORING ALBERTO GONZALES

HON. DON BACON

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring a dedicated community leader from Nebraska's Second Congressional District with an inspirational story. Alberto "Beto" Gonzales' countless stories of overcoming adversity and selfless contribution to the youth of our Hispanic community, serve as a shining example and model for current and future generations.

Mr. Gonzales grew up in the Hispanic neighborhoods of South Omaha, where his father worked in the thriving meat packing industry. His mother cared for him and his six brothers and sisters and was a positive influence in their lives. As a Christian, she also believed in the power of prayer in daily life. Unfortunately, Alberto fell into drugs, alcohol, and eventually depression and thoughts of suicide.

By the time Beto was 11 years old he was already part of his first street gang and in 1977, spent five days in jail for a knife fight where he was defending himself against several male attackers. Had an observer not testified in his defense, he would have likely spent 30 years or more in jail.

At the age of 23, Alberto met a woman who would become one of his most influential mentors; Sister Joyce Englert with the Chicano Awareness Center in South Omaha. Through her efforts, Beto learned about Christ and was able to get off drugs permanently. His memories of his mother praying for him as a child helped him to make the positive life changes. As a result, Beto committed the rest of his life to helping young people overcome the obstacles and influences of living in poverty, as well as the intense peer pressure from gangs. His commitment was sealed in a tattoo on his arm of the scripture found in Psalms 23:4.

Alberto struggled with academics and barely made it through high school, but Sister Joyce was an instrumental part in helping him overcome a learning disability, teaching him to read and write, and eventually convincing him to enroll at Metro Community College in 1983. He recalls being more scared to pick up a college book than a gun. Though Beto took longer than most to complete his Associates Degree in Chemical Dependency, his perseverance would pay off later in his professional career.

As gang and drug activity exploded in South Omaha in the late '80s and '90s, so did the opportunities for Beto to help endangered youth in that community. While most who work in this field burn out after seven years, Alberto has served in this area for more than 32 years. Beto ran drug and alcohol treatment groups while doing extensive outreach with schools through the Chicano Awareness Center. After that, Alberto served as a National

Crisis Hotline Counselor for Boystown and eventually became an Omaha Police Department School Liaison, and Gang Prevention and Intervention Specialist where he still works today. Today Beto also develops and implements outreach programs for at-risk youth as a Youth Counselor for the South Omaha Boys and Girls Club. Through all these efforts, Alberto Gonzales has touched and changed the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of youth in the Hispanic community.

Mr. Gonzales' outstanding accomplishments have earned him several prestigious awards including the Friedman Award for Excellence in Youth Mentoring, Nebraska Hispanic Man of the Year Award, Induction into the Omaha South High School Alumni Hall of Fame, and many others. Alberto has taught us all that how you start out in life is not as important as how you finish. He has taught us we can never give up on the youth in our community, no matter the darkness of their current situation or their past.

Alberto gives credit to God, his mother who always prayed for him, his mentor Sister Joyce, and many of the educators and professionals who encouraged him along the way. He believes that showing unconditional positive regard and spending quality time with at-risk children can make a positive difference. He may not save every kid he encounters, but he believes in a philosophy that says, "If you plant a seed now, someone else might water and grow it later."

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MERIDEN RECORD-JOURNAL

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Meriden Record-Journal on the 150th Anniversary of its inaugural publication. This paper has been a staple of the Meriden community for the past century and a half, and its leaders have played a crucial role in informing the town.

The Record-Journal traces its history to The Weekly Visitor newspaper first published in 1867. In 1892, E.E. Smith, along with Thomas Warnock, acquired the paper and began a family legacy of running the local publication for four generations. Smith's son, Wayne, succeeded his father as publisher, and following Wayne's death in 1966, his stepson Carter White served as publisher until his retirement in 1988. What's more, various members of the family worked as writers, editors, and managers for the paper, contributing to the paper's success.

Though the Record-Journal has a long history in Meriden, its leaders have not been afraid to innovate and develop new practices to modernize the publication. RJ Media Group, which now publishes the paper, has been a leader in online, social media, and multimedia news in Connecticut. In fact, Editor & Publisher trade magazine named the Record-Journal as one of the "10 Newspapers That Do It Right" in March 2016, recognizing the hard work of the publication's leadership to keep the paper relevant for today's readers.

Mr. Speaker, the Meriden Record-Journal has been an important community institution

for a century and a half, connecting and informing the town of Meriden. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor it, and all the leaders who have ensured its success here today.

HONORING CHERYL JENNINGS

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of longtime Bay Area anchor and reporter Cheryl Jennings on the occasion of her recognition by the International Association of Sufism with its Humanitarian Award on September 22, 2017. Ms. Jennings has dedicated her entire career to spreading humanity throughout the Bay Area and across the world, and it is fitting for her to receive this honor.

Born in Fort Benning, Georgia, to an Army family, Ms. Jennings lived in many places as a child around the U.S. and the world. This spurred in her a lifelong interest in travel and contributed to the development of her strong will, compassion, and strength. Ms. Jennings' successful career in broadcasting includes many achievements, including nine Emmy awards, seven "Gracie" awards from the Alliance of Women in Media, and many other honors and citations.

Her work at ABC 7/KGO has included frightening and memorable episodes. During the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, for example, she was the sole reporter in the studio, relaying critical information to a very scared public for hours. For this coverage, Ms. Jennings and her news team were awarded two of the highest broadcasting awards in the nation: the George Foster Peabody Award and the Radio-Television News Directors Association's Edward R. Murrow award.

In addition to her professional achievements, Ms. Jennings has volunteered her time to support numerous local charities and organizations over the years. For the past 15 years, she has been a stalwart supporter of Roots for Peace and has traveled around the world promoting landmine removal for countless families and communities. From Camp Okizu for children with cancer, to Performing Stars of Marin, to Marin Abused Women's Services, countless individuals and communities have been touched by her generosity and heart.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in expressing deep appreciation for Cheryl Jennings' humanitarian contributions, and in sending her best wishes for many more years of exceptional service.

HONORING HALIFAX COMMUNITY COLLEGE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Halifax Community College located in my congressional district in Halifax County, North Carolina in the Town of Weldon as the

institution celebrates its 50th Founders' Day and installs its new president, Dr. Michael Elam. Since its inception 50 years ago, Halifax Community College has served as a cornerstone of the Roanoke Valley region and has been a source of pride for the community.

What would eventually become Halifax Community College was first called Halifax County Technical Institute and was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly on September 7, 1967. Originally located on US Highway 301 in Halifax, the school, led by its first president Dr. Phillip W. Taylor, first opened its doors to students in February 1968. The school remained in its original location until 1977 when it relocated to its present location on NC Highway 158 in the Town of Weldon.

Mr. Speaker, since its humble beginnings half a century ago, Halifax Community College has become known statewide for its innovative facilities and educational excellence in the Roanoke Valley. The institution serves more than 7,000 students each year and offers more than 40 academic programs that lead to certificates, diplomas and associate degrees. Halifax Community College offers basic literacy skills, workforce and human resources development, and continuing education programs. It is also home to the renowned 1,500-seat multipurpose theater called The Centre.

The staff of Halifax Community College work in earnest each day to achieve the school's mission "to meet the diverse needs of [the] community by providing high-quality, accessible and affordable education and services for a rapidly changing and globally competitive marketplace."

In recognition of its hard work and achievements, Halifax Community College has been the recipient of many prestigious awards including the 2015 Southern Region Equity Award by the Association of Community College Trustees; 2016 Advancing Diversity Award by the American Association of Community Colleges; 2016 Rural Community College Alliance Innovator Award; and 2017 American Association of Community Colleges Community College Safety, Planning, and Leadership Award.

Mr. Speaker, Halifax Community College is a vibrant, student-oriented institution that continues to embrace student learning and success as its top priorities. Under the visionary leadership of past presidents Dr. Phillip W. Taylor (1967–1988), Dr. Elton L. Newbern Jr. (1988–1998), Dr. Theodore H. Gasper Jr. (1998–2006), and Dr. Ervin V. Griffin Sr. (2006–2017), Halifax Community College has prospered and has transformed educational opportunities and outcomes for the Roanoke Valley.

I have no doubt that Halifax Community College's new president, Dr. Michael Elam, will build on the work of those who came before him and will ably and skillfully lead the institution into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the staff and students of Halifax Community College, past and present, as they celebrate 50 years of excellence in education. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives and the people of the First Congressional District of North Carolina, I wish Halifax Community College great success for the next 50 years and beyond.