

was stationed at Camp Polk, Lenny took a trip to Beaumont, TX on leave and met a woman named Marie “Mongie” Eisen. In March of 1943, the two entered into a marriage that would last over 74 years. Mongie died just ten weeks ago in August. The couple lived in Deridder until Lenny was sent to Ft. Ord California for training before he boarded a ship headed to fight in the Pacific.

Lenny was a captain in the 536th Amphibious Tank Battalion that played an important role in the Battle of Leyte Gulf that began the invasion of the Philippine Islands. It was while fighting during the invasion of Okinawa that Lenny was wounded badly and received his battlefield recognition. When the war ended, Lenny left the military as a Major and returned with Mongie to Beaumont. After working for his father-in-law in the produce business, Lenny opened his own produce business.

Lenny was very active in the American Legion, Jewish War Veterans and the Masons. He always set an example for his sons and community by working hard every day and being active at his synagogue. After retiring, Lenny worked in his flower gardens around his home and watched his favorite football team, the Dallas Cowboys. Mr. Swartz loved his family dearly and truly lived a life worth living.

It is always an honor for me to recognize those American heroes who sacrificed so much defending and preserving our freedom in World War II. This truly was the greatest generation. We thank Mr. Swartz—as well as his entire family—for their bravery and sacrifice to our great nation.

CONGRATULATING HESLER
CARDENAS

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 3, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hesler Cardenas, a visually impaired senior at Gainesville High School who recently placed second in a nationwide art competition.

Hesler submitted a painting titled “Blossom Petal” to the 2017 American Printing House for Blind Insights Art Competition. Out of nearly 400 entries, Hesler’s painting surpassed all but one and earned a spot on the walls of the American Printing House in Kentucky.

Hesler stands out among his peers by pursuing his goals despite his visual limitations.

Mr. Speaker, Hesler’s success reminds us that with tenacity, hard work and determination often take us closer to our dreams than we could imagine.

As Hesler continues to inspire his fellow northeast Georgians, I look forward to seeing where his talent will take him next.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE STATE OF IDAHO WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE IDAHO STEP CHALLENGE TO IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH AND WELLNESS BY MEASURING THEIR DAILY STEP COUNT

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 3, 2017

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of several constituents in my district who have taken it upon themselves to improve their health and wellness by incorporating exercise and a balanced diet into their daily routine.

Last year, my staff and I created the Idaho STEP Challenge. The goal of the challenge was to encourage residents from across the state of Idaho to get fit and healthy by walking virtually across the United States, while collecting data on a wearable activity tracker and pedometer. Beginning on June 1, 2016, a group of more than 300 residents and several workplace teams set out on the virtual walk across the United States starting at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington D.C. and arriving at the Idaho Statehouse in Boise, Idaho more than a year later.

The nearly 3,000 mile route took participants through 18 iconic American cities, national parks, and spacious heartlands. The event was documented on social media under the #hikewithMike hashtag, and through regular email newsletters sent to participants. Residents also shared their encouraging weight loss and fitness stories online, and uploaded their mileage counts to a special section of my website. The event was devised to be a non-partisan, non-political interactive event open to all Idaho residents.

The Idaho STEP Challenge officially concluded on October 23, 2017. Those who participated demonstrated their commitment to healthy living and a spirited stand for fitness within our state. I would like to acknowledge the following participants for joining me on the virtual road to Boise and I thank them for promoting healthy lifestyles in our community.

Nick Abshire, Jeff Daniels, Kathy Parks, Lisa Lane, Susan Littlefield, Miranda Collins, Jeannette Barnes, Jessica Padour, Suelynn Williams, Pat Mills, Kellie Gough, Carolyn Simpson, Maryl Fisher, Penny Handley, Fred Hughes, Carolee McKenzie, Patrick Kole, Dana Flatter, Miranda Smith Collins, Bart & Julie Harwood, Gerald Simpson, Wendy Jaquet, Celia R. Gould, Sheila Woods, Gina Martin, Ray Simpson, Jan Simpson Rhoades, Dennis & Sheila Conley, Toni Orth, Ron Fisher, Connie Pond, Angela Degni, Sheila Ames, Elizabeth Criner, Elaine M. & James Long, Glen Tait, Cheryl Hardy, Shelby C. Sommer, Judy Slayton.

Once again, thanks to all the participants in the Idaho STEP Challenge and I congratulate them on their commitment to a better Idaho.

ETHIOPIA RESOLUTION

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 3, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the Government of Ethiopia’s continued pattern of repression and violence against its own people, and I urge the House of Representatives to vote on House Resolution 128, the “Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia Resolution.” This resolution calls on the Government of Ethiopia to take clear, decisive, steps toward becoming more inclusive, more democratic, and more respectful of the basic human rights of its own people.

This resolution has overwhelming bipartisan support with more than 70 cosponsors, and it passed out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously on July 27.

The ongoing human rights crisis in Ethiopia is extremely troubling to me, to the resolution’s other co-sponsors, the many Americans of Ethiopian heritage, and to numerous human rights groups. I firmly believe that the passage of this resolution will encourage the Ethiopian government to end its practice of violence and repression and provide a strong basis of an inclusive government.

Specifically, this resolution condemns: the excessive use of force by Ethiopian security forces; the killing of peaceful protestors; the arrest and detention of journalists, students, activists, and political leaders, and; the Ethiopian government’s abuse of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation to stifle political and civil dissent.

The resolution does not simply highlight the Ethiopian government’s increasingly authoritarian acts, but it also encourages the United States to support efforts to improve democracy and governance in Ethiopia. I believe that the United States can take actions that will positively influence the Ethiopian government and use our existing institutions to further democracy and effective governance in Ethiopia. Critically, the resolution calls on the Ethiopian government to admit UN human rights observers so they can conduct an independent and thorough examination of the current state of human rights in Ethiopia.

On March 9 of this year, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, held a hearing to discuss specific steps the United States can take to bring about positive changes for the Ethiopian government and their people. Among those who testified was Deacon Yoseph Tafari, of the St. Mary’s Ethiopian Orthodox Church located in Aurora, Colorado. Deacon Yoseph was raised in Ethiopia and has experienced the daily struggles too many Ethiopians have faced living in abject poverty under an oppressive government.

Deacon Yoseph fled from Ethiopia in 1976, and came to the United States as a refugee. He and many of the members of the Ethiopian community in my Congressional district in Colorado—including the Oromo and Amharas—have worked diligently to organize and assist those still suffering from repression in their home country.

Oromo Community President of Colorado, Jamal Said, has also shared his concerns with me, and both of these gentlemen have no motives other than a concern about the safety

and state of democracy in Ethiopia. I appreciate their leadership in the community as they continue to fight for democracy in their homeland.

Unfortunately, stories like this are not uncommon in my district and I am disappointed that the House has not yet scheduled a floor vote on House Resolution 128. I note that on two prior occasions a vote was tentatively scheduled. In both of these instances it is my understanding that the vote was postponed due to pressure from the Ethiopian government who continues to make promises to curb human rights abuses against their own people but fail to deliver. Additionally, it has been brought to my attention that the Ethiopian Government has threatened to cut off security

cooperation with the United States should we proceed with House Resolution 128.

I am particularly dismayed that rather than solving their problems and moving towards becoming a more democratic country, the Ethiopian government has chosen instead to hire a D.C. lobbying firm, at a cost of \$150,000 a month, to “work with the [Ethiopian Government] to develop and execute a public affairs plan to enhance the dialogue and relationships with policymakers, media, opinion leaders and business leaders . . .” in addition to “meetings with members of Congress, their staffs, and executive branch officials.”

The issue the Ethiopian government needs to address is the repression of democracy and its citizens in Ethiopia. The solution to what-

ever negative perception it has in the halls of the U.S. Congress is not a public affairs one, but rather what concrete steps are being taken against democracy in Ethiopia. That is why I remain committed to working with House leadership to have a vote scheduled on House Resolution 128.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage leadership to schedule a vote and I call on my colleagues to vote in favor and pass House Resolution 128. I will continue working with local Ethiopian community leaders in Colorado and across the country to raise awareness of the human rights abuses occurring in Ethiopia and to bring relief from oppression to the Ethiopian people.