

health and well-being of women across America.

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HONORING ROTARY DISTRICT 7150  
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

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**HON. JOHN KATKO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Rotary District 7150 of Central New York as it hosts Rotary International President-Elect Ian Riseley of Australia.

This weekend, Rotary International President-Elect Riseley will address incoming club presidents at the Multi-District President-Elect Training Seminar and People of Action Dinner in my district in Syracuse, New York. I am proud to see local members of Rotary District 7150 of Central New York honored during this, the centennial of the Rotary International Foundation.

Rotary International is home to more than 35,000 clubs worldwide, including 43 clubs in District 7150 of Central New York. The Rotary's mission of "service above self" is exemplified in our local Rotary Clubs' work assisting veterans in need, recognizing the hard work and success of high school students, restoring our prized parks and waterways, and partnering with local food pantries to reduce hunger throughout the 24th District.

With over 1,200 Rotary members locally, Central New York is a better place because of the work these individuals do for our community. I applaud the members of Rotary District 7150 of Central New York for their service, fellowship, and passion.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. BILL JOHNSON**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 155.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. MICHAEL T. McCaul**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Speaker, on March 15, 2017, I missed the voting session. If present, I would have voted as follows:

YES—H.R. 132—Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office Conveyance Act of 2017

YES—H.R. 648—to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir

YES—Motion to Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MISSOURI WHITEWATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

**HON. JASON SMITH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Missouri Whitewater Championships celebrating their 50th year March 17 through 19, 2017. The races are held at the Millstream Gardens Conservation Area of the Saint Francis River near Fredericktown, Missouri.

The Championships continue a tradition begun in 1968, when the first Saint Francis River Whitewater Slalom Race was held. Since then, the event has expanded its scope and attracts beginners and seasoned competitors from other states and countries. Even Olympic-class paddlers have used this race as training preparation for future Olympic Games.

The event first begun by the Meramec River Canoe Club is now hosted by the Missouri Whitewater Association. It comes together as 100 volunteers set up the race course, provide safety, judge, time, and score the participants while hundreds of spectators cheer.

For providing sportsmen with the thrill of competition on the Saint Francis River for half a century and enhancing tourism for Madison and surrounding counties through its annual Whitewater Championships, I am happy to congratulate the Missouri Whitewater Association today before the United States House of Representatives.

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HONORING THE LIFE OF NILS  
MICHAEL DECKER

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of Mr. Nils Michael "Mike" Decker of Fresno. Mike Decker passed away on Tuesday, February 14, 2017 in Fresno, California.

Mike was a wonderful, kind man and a dedicated educator. Mike was born in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. His career in education began at St. Alphonso's School in Fresno, California followed by Orange Center School in Fresno.

Mike then served 25 years as Principal and Superintendent at Laton Unified School District in Fresno County. In addition, Mike also served on my State Assembly Staff as District Director.

In addition to his friends and family, Mike was adored by his students. Mike positively influenced the lives of thousands of children with this commitment to education and he helped many young people reach for the stars.

Nils Michael Decker is survived by his wife of 52 years, Diana Decker, his son, Timothy J. Decker, his son, Scott A. Decker and his wife, Maria and his daughter, Katherine Decker. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Michael Hill, Jadyn Garrett, Nicholas Decker and his great granddaughter, Neelia Grace Hill.

Mike's sister, Margo Bellman and his brother Gordon Decker both of Michigan also survive him.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring the life and career of Nils Michael Decker, a hero to his family, a wonderful role model for educators and exemplary father, grandfather, great grandfather and friend.

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INTRODUCING THE AFRICAN  
DESCENT AFFAIRS ACT

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to note my introduction of the African Descent Affairs Act, as we continue to highlight the International Decade for People of African Descent.

We have seen a sharp increase in racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of discrimination across the world over the last year. Human rights violations emanating from racial prejudice and discrimination have negatively impacted people of African descent around the world, resulting in racial bias and disparities in education, employment, health, housing, justice, and other sectors. We must act now to reverse these disturbing trends. The International Decade for People of African Descent provides an opportunity to not only draw attention to these inequities, but to also join efforts with countries around the globe to develop and implement national strategies honoring the vast contributions of people of African descent and to combat continuing issues of prejudice and discrimination such as those currently gripping our nation.

To aid these efforts, I have introduced the African Descent Affairs Act. The Act seeks to improve the situation of people of African descent around the world by establishing within our State Department a Global Office of African Descent Affairs to establish global foreign policy and assistance strategies for people of African descent; creating a "Fund" to support antidiscrimination and empowerment efforts by African descent led civil society organizations; and requiring Annual State Department Human Rights Reports to include a section on discrimination faced by people of African descent. I believe that U.S. foreign policy strategies such as these have improved the situation of vulnerable groups internationally and would greatly assist in responding to increasing levels of prejudice and discrimination faced by people of African descent around the globe.

The State Department has already launched many successful initiatives that have aided vulnerable populations, such as the Office of Global Women's Issues, the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, the Special Representative to Muslim Communities, and the LGBT Global Equality Fund. Implementing a Global Office of African Descent Affairs will continue this tradition and facilitate the full and equal participation of people of African descent in society, promote knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contributions of people of African descent, and strengthen and implement legal frameworks that combat racial discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will embrace the challenge of combating prejudice and discrimination across the

world. I encourage them to join me in recognizing the collective history and achievements made by people of African descent by supporting the African Descent Affairs Act.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed Roll Call vote numbers 159, 160, and 161. Had I been present, I would have voted Aye on roll call numbers 159, 160 and nay on roll call vote 161.

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IN RECOGNITION OF THE BARNES  
AT HAMILTON STATION VINE-  
YARDS

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**HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and commend my constituents, Andrew and Maryann Fialdini, and their winery, the Barns at Hamilton Station Vineyards, on receiving the Governor's Cup in the 2017 Governor's Cup Wine Competition. This win not only speaks to the hard work, entrepreneurship and expertise of Andrew and Maryann, but also the growing and transforming Loudoun County wine industry.

Since opening 8 years ago, their hard work has certainly come to fruition. Andrew, Maryann, and the vineyard's Wine Maker, Michael Shaps, have worked diligently to produce local, yet authentic-tasting, French-style wines on their eleven acre vineyard located in Hamilton, Virginia. And this year, two of their wines, the 2014 Meritage and 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon, were named gold medalists in the Governor's Cup Wine Competition.

The judges of this year's competition reviewed 494 bottles from 102 different wineries, and only 23 bottles were named gold medalists. Impressively of those 23 bottles, Andrew and Maryann's 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon was named the best wine and awarded the Governor's Cup—a recognition that a Loudoun winery has never before received in the 37 years of this stringent and prestigious competition.

Risk-taking small businesses have always been the life blood of the Loudoun County economy and our national economy and entrepreneurial families like the Fialdini's have been leaders in fostering strong, local economies that will continue to thrive and grow for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Andrew and Maryann Fialdini and Michael Shaps for their successful small business and their special awards at the 2017 Governor's Cup Wine Competition. I also wish them and their family the best in all of their future endeavors.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF  
CHARLES HUNNICUTT

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Charles Hunnicutt for his outstanding work and to congratulate him on his retirement after 45 years of dedicated public service.

Charles began his career with the United States Air Force, honorably serving his country from June 1972 to June 1976. He was then hired to work for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a Criminal Investigations and Collections Officer from 1976 to 1987.

In 1988, Charles joined the Fresno County Department of Social Services and remained there until 2005. That same year, he was offered the position as Fresno County Veterans Service Officer. In 2010, Charles was asked to also serve as the Madera County Veterans Service Officer. Charles has remained with both counties and has served Fresno County Veterans and Madera County Veterans with great passion and honor.

It is with great pleasure that I applaud Charles Hunnicutt for his many years of tireless work on behalf of veterans and our community. His ongoing dedication to public service is extremely commendable.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that in addition to his countless gifts to veterans and our community, Charles has been a true champion for my constituents where he serves on my 16th District Veterans Advisory Board and has assisted my staff with service academy nominations. In my office, a majority of our constituent casework involves assisting veterans. These are sensitive cases that can sometimes take a great deal of time to resolve. Charles is someone that my staff and I can always count on to work together on behalf of veterans.

I have personally worked with Charles for over 13 years in my capacity as a Member of Congress and I can proudly call him my friend. In his capacity as Veterans Service Officer, Charles is always available to discuss cases and work together on issues of concern. I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the commitment, dedication and success of Charles Hunnicutt and wish him well as he embarks on new endeavors.

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BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

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**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this week commemorates Brain Awareness Week, which presents an important opportunity to educate lawmakers, students, and the broader public about brain science, and its many impacts and benefits. This is critical when you consider that brain disorders and diseases affect the lives of nearly 100 million Americans—from Alzheimer's to ALS to mental illness.

Neurological and neurodegenerative disorders are among the leading causes of disability in the United States and around the

world—greater than heart disease and cancer put together. As society ages, this number will increase exponentially as will the cost to the healthcare system and to the economy. Yet, the underlying causes of most neurological diseases remain unknown.

Neuroscience is the next great frontier. Research and work being done in this field needs to be front and center in both the private world and Congress.

The bipartisan Congressional Neuroscience Caucus' mission is to build awareness of the intrinsic role brain research plays in understanding ourselves and our society. As the Co-Founder and Co-Chair, I am committed to working on these important issues and hope my colleagues will join our efforts as members of the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus.

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MR. JOSEPH ROBERGE

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**HON. LEE M. ZELDIN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Joseph Philip Roberge. Immediately following his graduation from High School in 1942, Joseph enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and became a Navigator on a B-17 bomber with the 398th Bomb Group located at Nuthampstead Air Base in England.

Joseph flew 35 missions over Europe, including being part of air support at Omaha Beach on D-Day. Throughout his time in service, he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, European Theater of Operations Ribbon, two Bronze Stars, and Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Our country owes a debt of gratitude to Joseph for his selfless actions taken to protect his homeland. It is important we honor these types of individuals as best we can and I hope that many will follow in his footsteps and give back to our country as graciously as he did. People like him are a rare breed and they help make not only our country, but our world a much safer and better place.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. STEVE RUSSELL**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, due to travel delays caused by Winter Storm Stella, I was unable to attend votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 159, YEA on Roll Call No. 160, and YEA on Roll Call No. 161.

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TRAVELING WALL THAT HEALS IN  
MENA, ARKANSAS

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**HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN**

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the opening ceremonies of the Traveling Wall That Heals in Mena, Arkansas.