

NATO's Partnership for Peace program, Azerbaijan cooperates with the United States in countering terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and narcotics trafficking. Azerbaijani troops serve shoulder to shoulder with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, as they previously did in Kosovo and Iraq. In support of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan has extended important over-flight clearances for U.S. and NATO flights as well as regularly providing landing and refueling operations at its airports for U.S. and NATO forces. Azerbaijan also plays an important role in the Northern Distribution Network, a supply route to Afghanistan, by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a key player for enhancing global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline are the main arteries delivering Caspian Sea energy resources to global markets, and completion of the Southern Gas Corridor—which will run from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, and Albania into Italy—will increase the energy security of key American allies by increasing the amount of natural gas from the Caspian Sea to European markets.

Notably, Azerbaijan also provides roughly 40 percent of Israel's oil consumption. What may be more surprising to some is that Azerbaijan—a predominantly Muslim country—enjoys friendly ties with Israel beyond oil sales. Jews have resided in Azerbaijan for 2,500 years without persecution and today, the Jewish community in Azerbaijan numbers over 12,000. Azerbaijan is also home to Christian communities and has been praised for its religious tolerance by the European Parliament.

As co-chair of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, I congratulate the people of Azerbaijan on the monumental occasion of Republic Day in their national history. May the partnership between the United States and Azerbaijan progress and continue to benefit both of our nations.

AUNT BETTY'S 95TH

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Betty Helms, a World War II Navy Veteran who turns 95 today. Betty's life has been full of hard work and accomplishments as she was in the first group of enlisted women allowed in the U.S. Navy. Her tenacity to overcome adversity and eliminate barriers truly shows her character and life's work. Continuing with her lifelong theme of removing roadblocks to pursue her goals, she went on to earn an accounting degree from the University of Missouri in 1950. She later started her own consulting business and did not retire until age 85.

I am honored to share my gratitude and respect for this accomplished Missourian. Her dedication, determination and service are an inspiration to us all. I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking Betty for her years of service and wishing her the happiest of birthdays.

INTRODUCTION OF INDONESIAN FAMILY REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation with my colleague, Rep. FRANK PALLONE, Jr., which would simply allow Christian Indonesian citizens who arrived in the United States between January 1, 1997 and November 30, 2002 fleeing religious persecution, the opportunity to reopen their claims for asylum within two years of the bill's enactment. The bill would only apply to individuals who were denied asylum solely for missing filing deadline which closes one year after arrival.

Beginning in 1997, when extreme violence and destruction of churches in Indonesia was at its height, many Indonesian Christians were driven from their homes. These individuals came to the United States, seeking refuge from persecution for their religious beliefs, but were either unable to file before the one-year deadline or were unaware any deadline existed. They deserve the opportunity to have their claims heard.

The United States has a long history of taking in refugees fleeing persecution and providing a process to fairly consider their claims. This bill does not automatically grant asylum, but merely removes a procedural barrier to their claims being considered. These individuals seeking asylum deserve a second chance to avoid the persecution they have fled and remain united with their families.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

HONORING SAMUEL KEITH TOLIVER, SR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Samuel Keith Toliver, Sr.

Mr. Toliver serves the Mound Bayou community as a consummate professional and champion of organizations that are committed to innovation, change, and providing solutions.

Mr. Toliver has successfully sustained a 30 plus year career as a school teacher and is a respected and well-known name amongst the Mound Bayou community. He founded and funded the Boy Scout Troop 302 to help young men develop the skills and knowledge that will help them meet the challenges of the twenty first century. Many of his troops have been recognized by the former President of the United States of America, William Clinton, for earning the highest ranking of Eagle Scout and have gone on to achieve the highest rankings in the military. He is also a retired U.S. Army veteran; he served in the Vietnam War. After retirement he went on to serve as Commander of the American Legion; ensuring and helping veterans to receive severance by taking them to various centers and appointments for health issues. He also became a

local farmer and a member of the Black Farmers Association, which allows many of the local community to pick from his various harvests to feed their families.

He continuously uses various formats to serve and inspire others throughout his home state of Mississippi. This includes spearheading countless charity events, and encouraging others to demonstrate acts of service. Samuel K. Toliver, Sr. is a powerful voice in the community and will continue to blaze trails for the advancement of people of color in professional settings.

For the past 23 years, Mr. Toliver has been serving as a constable. He continues to serve his community in Mound Bayou, and at 71 years old, he shows no signs of slowing down.

Mr. Samuel Keith Toliver, Sr., and former wife Lois Gant Toliver, are the devoted parents of two sons: Samuel Keith, Jr and Steven, and two daughters: Kesha and Kamaletta.

Mr. Toliver is also a dedicated member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Mound Bayou, MS, where he serves as a Pastor.

The past 50 years are saturated with the footprints of Toliver's positive influences in his service to his church, community, and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Samuel Keith Toliver for his tireless service to his community of country.

WILLIAM CORONA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud William Corona for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

William Corona is a student at Arvada K-8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by William Corona is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to William Corona for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HELPING ENSURE THAT ALL VETERANS GET THE CARE THEY HAVE EARNED

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong support for the significant package of the veteran's bills that we considered in the House both yesterday and today.

As the former Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee (2001 through 2005), I am acutely aware of the challenges our veterans face, especially as they transition from military to civilian life. As Chairman, I authored more than a dozen laws to expand health, education, job training and homelessness benefits for the men and women who served in uniform. Thankfully these laws continue to help our veterans today.

Still, there are new problems and new issues that urgently need our attention. Massive wait times, forged documents by VA officials, ineptitude, lack of equipment and understaffing at VA medical facilities are just a few of the significant transgressions that have been exposed and are undermining the quality of service and the treatment our veterans receive.

In 2014 and 2016 Congress passed the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (P.L. 113–146) and the Faster Care for Veterans Act (P.L. 114–286), respectively, to usher in a complete overhaul of VA systems and to institute new technological services for scheduling and in order to secure more timely appointments. Some, but not nearly enough, progress has occurred. Much more must be done.

I commend Chairman PHIL ROE, MD and his team at the Veterans Affairs Committee on the package of bills before us this week. All seven will help improve the benefit programs and the delivery of healthcare service for our veterans.

For instance, The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (H.R. 2288) will empower veterans who have been denied benefits to have more options as they pursue their appeals. Under the new bill, vets will be able to waive a hearing and submit additional evidence, pursue a hearing and submit additional evidence, or transfer the jurisdiction of their case to the Board of Veterans Appeals. The new options should help cut through some wait time.

The VA Scheduling Accountability Act (H.R. 467) would require an annual certification of compliance with scheduling directives. Additionally the bill blocks awards and bonuses to any leadership personnel at any medical center that fails to comply with the scheduling directives. Another bill before us, H.R. 1005 would allow the federal government to enter into agreements with state veteran's homes to pay for adult day health care for certain eligible veterans.

The No Hero Left Untreated Act (H.R. 1162) will create a one year pilot program at the VA to use innovative therapy to treat veterans who suffer from invisible wounds, which include post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic

brain injury (TBI), military sexual trauma, chronic pain, or opiate addiction. As the author of the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act (P.L. 108–422) which authorized regional veteran polytrauma centers for multiple injuries including TBI, I fully support H.R. 1162 as a way to ensure that the VA is able to adapt to the newest and best practices for treating veterans with these unique traumas and conditions.

The Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017 (H.R. 1725) will require stronger reporting requirements from the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding the necessity for in-person disability examinations; and the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017 (H.R. 1329) will increase the cost-of-living-adjustment for disabled veterans who receive compensation to equal the same rate of increase for citizens who receive Social Security in 2018.

Finally, the VA Prescription Data Accountability Act (H.R. 1545) will help combat drug addiction among our veterans by creating better information and data sharing between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the states' recording programs.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleagues that while this package of veterans bills marks another step forward, we cannot be lulled into thinking that the Department of Veterans Affairs and the delivery of veterans' benefits and healthcare will be forever fixed simply with the enactment of new legislation, no matter how well written.

Good legislation is the necessary, minimum first step. But equally important is the full and consistent implementation of the new laws, along with regular and aggressive oversight by this Congress. We must be vigilant and continue to push to ensure that all veterans get the care they have earned—at the time they need it—not months or years later.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 1

10:30 a.m.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To receive a briefing on countering corruption in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe region, focusing on returning ill-gotten assets and closing safe havens.

SD-G11

JUNE 6

10:30 a.m.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine Austria's chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, focusing on priorities and challenges.

SR-188

JUNE 7

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Subcommittee on National Parks

To hold hearings to examine working to improve the National Park Service workplace environment.

SD-366

JUNE 8

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

JUNE 13

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Justice.

SD-192