In the 115th Congress, I will proudly join the Democratic Caucus in continuing the fight for equal pay for equal work, investment in employment opportunities for women, and raising the minimum wage. Because as we know, when ''Women Succeed, America Succeeds.''

TRIBUTE TO MR. LEON A. THOMPSON'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2017

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the celebration of Mr. Leon A. Thompson's 100th birthday. With nearly a century passing, Mr. Thompson has dedicated his life to his family, St. Mark's the Evangelist Catholic Church, the City of New York, and giving back to his Harlem community.

Mr. Thompson was born on January 28, 1917 in Washington, D.C. At 18 years old, Mr. Thompson and his three sisters moved to New York City where he has lived since. For 32 years, Mr. Thompson operated the Number 3 and other train lines comprising the original A Division of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT). These lines later became incorporated into the modern day New York City Transportation Authority. As a subway motorman for over three decades, he contributed to an era of growth and modernization of a thriving, welcoming and inclusive New York City.

Throughout his life, Mr. Thompson has dedicated all the time and effort he could exert for St. Mark's the Evangelist Catholic Church in Harlem over the last 82 years. This makes him one of the longest practicing parishioners to the church and an indelible figure serving on many boards and ministries. Mr. Thompson has known and worked with every pastor in St. Mark's the Evangelist Catholic Church during its 109-year history. For a time, Mr. Thompson worked as an electrician at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. When his work day ended he spent his remaining time working to improve St. Mark's the Evangelist Catholic Church installing a public announcement system, lighting system, and refurbishing the pews for the benefit of parishioners and students of St. Mark's the Evangelist School whose space was shared.

In his spare time, Mr. Thompson taught many young men in his church and community commercial, labor and vocational skills that they employed building and improving New York City. Mr. Thompson has dedicated his life to his fellow parishioners at St. Mark's the Evangelist Catholic Church, his neighbors and residents of Harlem, and New York City for 82 years. His contributions to the Harlem community and New York City has made him a role model for all persons, regardless of creed or affiliation, as a public servant and exemplary citizen.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have had the time to recognize and celebrate the tremendous life of Mr. Leon A. Thompson and his 100th birthday celebration.

THE APOLLO 1 MEMORIAL ACT

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2017

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the ''Apollo 1 Memorial Act''. Today is the 50th Anniversary of the tragedy which claimed the lives of three brave American heroes. This piece of legislation is meant to honor their legacy and ensure we never forgot by creating a memorial for them in our national shrine for heroes, Arlington National Cemetery.

On January 27, 1967, Astronauts Command Pilot Virgil I. ''Gus'' Grissom, Senior Pilot Edward H. White II, and Pilot Roger B. Chaffee were killed in an electrical fire that broke out inside their *Apollo I* Command Module on Launch Pad 34 at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The accident led to a detailed internal investigation and congressional hearings. As a result of their sacrifice NASA made improvements and changes to the Apollo program which ultimately resulted in *Apollo 11* landing on the moon two years later.

Although all three astronauts were posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor, these three fearless astronauts who were set to be the first Americans into space under the Apollo program have not received a memorial at Arlington as was done for the Space Shuttle *Challenger* and *Columbia* crews.

This bill would redress that unfortunate omission which continues to be a burden on the hearts of those who loved them. Arlington National Cemetery is where we recognize heroes who have passed in the service of the Nation. It is fitting that on the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo I* accident we acknowledge these astronauts by building a memorial in their honor. This bill would direct the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), to construct at an appropriate place in Arlington National Cemetery, a memorial marker honoring these three heroic men.

In addition to $500,000 from the Army's fiscal year 2017 operations and maintenance appropriated funds, the bill provides the NASA Administrator with the authority to accept donations of services, money, and property to help allay the cost of the memorial marker.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, on the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo 1* accident, we have the opportunity to honor these three brave men and their contribution to America's preeminence in human spaceflight. It is time to build a memorial so that current and future Americans never forget their sacrifice. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can come together to support this legislation honoring these heroes.

INTRODUCTION OF JOHN TANNER FAIRNESS AND INDEPENDENCE IN REDISTRICTING ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 27, 2017

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the John Tanner Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act, a bill I introduced earlier today.

The President of the United States has said our elections are ''rigged.'' When it comes to the drawing of Congressional districts, he may well be right.

In most states, districts are drawn by the state legislature, and as a result, whichever party controls the state legislature ends up drawing Congressional districts specifically designed to maximize the number of Congressional seats that party can win.

In other words, the elected officials choose the voters, instead of the voters choosing the elected officials.

If enacted, the John Tanner Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act would fix this by requiring states to use bipartisan redistricting commissions to draw maps. No single party would get to control the process.

Historically, both parties have engaged in gerrymandering to some extent or another. But that does not make it right.

In a representative democracy, the people need to be able to freely and fairly choose their elected representatives.

Unfortunately, that is not always happening.

In 2012, Democrats received more than 1.1 million more votes across the country than Republicans for the House of Representatives, but because of the way the maps were drawn, Republicans won almost 54 percent of the House seats.

In 2016, it has been estimated that Republicans won approximately 51 percent of the votes cast across the country for the House of Representatives, but won more than 55 percent of the House seats.

This is not what the Founders envisioned. They designed the House of Representatives to be the Congressional chamber that most accurately reflects the views of the people.

The failure of the House to more accurately reflect the will of the electorate is a formula for the electorate to lose faith in the institution. It makes people cynical and discourages them from participating.

We can do better.

A democracy is supposed to be a marketplace of ideas. The playing field is supposed to be fair and competitive, not gerrymandered and monopolized.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill, and help restore some much needed faith in Congress.