

About 600 foreign fighters in Syria have come from the Balkan states. ISIS and al-Qaeda terrorists present a threat to Serbia and the region just as they present a threat to the U.S.

We must continue coordinating with our Serbian partners to stop returning terrorists and neutralize networks that recruit fighters in the Balkans.

The U.S. is also working with Serbia to improve its independent judiciary and fight corruption. A democratic Serbia with a strong rule of law is in America's interests.

But there are others who do not share this goal.

Russian disinformation efforts are designed to keep Serbia in its sphere of influence and poison our warming friendship.

Nevertheless, Serbia's integration to the West has continued to move forward.

In 2006, Serbia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program and, in 2015, signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan with the alliance to strengthen cooperation.

Recently the European Union announced that Serbia could join the EU as early as 2025. I applaud this step which will strengthen Belgrade's political institutions and economic ties with the west.

Together we share the same dreams of a bright and free future for both our countries.

We are blessed to have brave men and women that ensure our futures are bright and free.

I want to thank the Serbian armed forces for standing with America in the wars of the past and in the challenges we will face together in the future.

And that's just the way it is.

#### JACK ARMSTRONG BREAKS CLASS 5A SWIMMING RECORD

#### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jack Armstrong, of Manvel High School, for earning a pair of gold medals at the Class 5A Swimming and Diving meet in Austin.

Armstrong broke the 5A record with a time of 44.57 seconds in the 100 free in the preliminary round on Friday. On Saturday, he won both the 50 and 100 free events. His accomplishments in the pool have made his family and our Manvel community proud.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Jack Armstrong. We look forward to seeing what he will accomplish in the future. Hoka Hey.

#### RECOGNIZING THE BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF THE ELKS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Benevolent and Protective

Order of the Elks of the United States of America on their One-hundred fiftieth Anniversary for their outstanding and unparalleled service to the United States.

The Elks started their charitable organization on February 16th, 1868. Since then they have grown nationwide creating and advocating for different services to our communities by advocating their mission to include the principles of charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity; to recognize a belief in God; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its Members; to quicken the spirit of American patriotism; to cultivate good fellowship; to perpetuate itself as a fraternal organization, and to provide for its government.

The Elks are committed to America's Promise, an alliance of organizations building a better future for our youth through our Scholarship Program, the Hoop Shoot free throw program, and our Drug Awareness Program.

The Elks have pledged NOT to forget our nation's veterans. Each year we visit VA Medical Centers, Outpatient Clinics and State Veterans Homes providing companionship and enhancing their level of comfort.

The Elks also adopt by state its own charitable project. These include summer camps for children with disabilities or who are financially disadvantaged; in-home treatment for people with disabilities; children's hospitals; cancer research; and providing safe, temporary heavens for abused families.

Mr. Speaker, The Order of the Elks have become cornerstones in their individual communities all throughout the United States. These lodges are a source of knowledge, expertise and leadership for our communities, and I once again congratulate them on their momentous milestone.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on February 26, 2018, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on No. 81 and 82.

#### TAX REFORM WORKS

#### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last year, Congress passed landmark legislation, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

This legislation cuts taxes in every income group.

Now, Texans are seeing the impact of this pro-family, pro-growth tax reform.

And so are the employees of Insperity.

In 1986, Insperity launched with little more than a 600 square foot home office and two employees in Texas's Second Congressional District.

But the small startup quickly began growing, eventually turning into one of the largest HR outsourcing firms in the country.

Earlier this month the company announced bonuses to its employees—made possible through the U.S. tax reform act.

The amount of the bonuses will range from \$1,000 to \$4,000 per employee dependent upon the employee's tenure with the company.

These bonuses total approximately \$9 million and will not be awarded to the management team and other senior leaders.

The company says: "We believe the passage of tax reform is positive news and should provide for stronger growth of Insperity, the small business community and the broader U.S. economy."

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats may call \$1,000–\$4,000 "crumbs . . ."

But to the people of the Texas Second Congressional District this is money that will go directly back into the pockets of a community hit hard by Hurricane Harvey.

This extra money will help families rebuild their homes, restore their possessions that were ruined by the floodwaters and recover from the devastation brought forward by the Hurricane.

Mr. Speaker, Insperity is just one example of the good work that this tax reform package has done.

The latest data shows that a typical middle-income family of four in Texas's Second Congressional District will see a Tax Cut of \$2,788.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has put more money in the pockets of employees and allowed industry to grow.

And that's just the way it is.

#### MO'S PLACE CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

#### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mo's Place, of Katy, TX, on its 30th Anniversary.

Mo Jeloudarzadeh came to America with only his suitcase in hand, and worked his way through college as a dishwasher. He was later promoted to bartender and it was during this time that Mo fell in love with country music. In March 1988, he opened Mo's Place in a small strip center in the Katy area. Mo's passion for serving others and his welcoming hospitality have been the key ingredients to his success. Last year, Mo was awarded the Pioneer Award from the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame for his continued support of Texas Country music artists.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Mo Jeloudarzadeh for celebrating 30 years of success at Mo's Place. We're excited to see what the next 30 years bring.

#### HONORING CHIEF KENNETH PAR- KINSON FOR 25 YEARS IN THE PLATTSBURGH CITY POLICE DE- PARTMENT

#### HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chief Kenneth Parkinson on his

retirement from the Plattsburgh City Police Department after 25 years of service.

Originally from Au Sable, New York, Ken entered the Police Academy in 1993 after graduating from Clinton Community College. In 2003, Ken was promoted to the rank of Patrol Sergeant. As Patrol Sergeant, he served on the Special Response Team, which received a mayoral commendation for service in the 2015 Dannemora Manhunt. Soon after, Ken was promoted to Administrative Lieutenant. After 24 years of service with the Police Department, Ken was appointed in 2017 by Mayor Colin Read to serve as Police Chief, where he worked tirelessly to promote community policing and made combating the opiate epidemic a priority. Ken is a lifelong resident of the Plattsburgh area, and is an exemplary member of his community.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I would like to thank Chief Parkinson for his years of hard work and dedication to his community, and wish him all the best in the years ahead.

#### MICHAEL VISSER RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED EDUCATION SERVICE AWARD FROM VVC FOUNDATION

#### HON. PAUL COOK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michael Visser who will receive the Distinguished Education Service Award from the Victor Valley College Foundation on February 24, 2018.

Michael was selected for this award by the foundation because of his commitment to encouraging his students to pursue careers in law enforcement. After retiring from three decades in law enforcement, Michael began teaching courses at VVC and was instrumental in opening the Regional Public Safety Training Center on campus. He also played a vital role in assisting the VVC Campus Police Department in obtaining new firearms and improved training. He has gone above and beyond in supporting the campus by facilitating emergency drills such as "The Great Shake-out" and "Active Shooter Training." Michael's passion for giving back to his students is evident in everything he does.

On behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives, I would like to congratulate Michael Visser for his tireless effort on behalf of his students at VVC. Undoubtedly, he is well-deserving of the Distinguished Education Service Award.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE RARE DISEASE ADVANCEMENT, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION (RARE) ACT

#### HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Rare disease Advancement, Research, and Education (RARE) Act.

This important, bipartisan legislation would address many of the issues facing rare disease patients and families. Today, Rare Disease Day, many of these individuals are sharing their stories and educating communities of researchers, health professionals, governments, families, and friends about how rare diseases affect them. I am proud to introduce the RARE Act not only in recognition of these efforts, but moreover to address the many unique challenges facing the rare disease patient community.

Almost 7,000 rare diseases affect nearly 30,000,000 Americans, and many lack an effective treatment. There remains much Congress can do to improve rare disease awareness, education, research, surveillance, diagnosis, and treatment, and to address common challenges faced by rare disease patients.

Over the course of my time in Congress, I have met with countless rare disease patients and their families. Each story is unique—and in many cases heartbreaking—but it is essential that Congress address some of the root causes behind these stories.

Rare diseases cross the medical spectrum, but individuals with rare diseases face some common challenges. In large part due to their limited patient population size, these individuals may have difficulty obtaining an accurate diagnosis, finding physicians or treatment centers with expertise in their disease, and ultimately finding appropriate treatment options and cures. While over 450 drugs have been approved for the treatment of rare diseases, millions of Americans suffering from a rare disease have no approved treatment options.

For decades, Congress has worked to support advancements in rare disease, with legislation ranging from the Orphan Drug Act to the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act to most recently, the 21st Century Cures Act. In addition, the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health have made important strides, prioritizing research, development, and approval of treatment targeting rare diseases. Nonetheless, it remains clear that there remains much policymakers can do to further these critical efforts.

The RARE Act would represent an important step in this direction, addressing some of the commonalities between rare diseases and aiming to improve rare disease treatment, research, and diagnostics.

First, the RARE Act would expand our understanding of rare diseases by enhancing an existing and successful program: the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network. The Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is made up of 21 research 'centers of excellence' studying rare diseases in an interdisciplinary way, working with patients and others on clinical studies and other research.

Second, the RARE Act would fill critical gaps in our healthcare system, improving coordination, surveillance, and awareness of rare diseases. For example, the RARE Act would require the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to create a National Rare Disease or Condition Surveillance System. Modelled off of similar systems for other conditions, this formalized infrastructure would track rare disease data, helping researchers to understand commonalities between diseases. The RARE Act would also require the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to expand and

intensify its work to ensure that health professionals are aware of rare disease diagnoses and treatments. And it would mandate an updated report on rare disease efforts from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, to ensure that Congress has the best tools possible to address these issues.

Passage of the RARE Act would represent a major stride in combating these unique diseases and conditions, and enhance the federal government, non-profit, and private sectors capacities to improve patients' lives. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the RARE Act.

#### SUBURBAN SUGAR LAND WOMEN HONOR FORT BEND COUNTY LEADERS FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

#### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Fort Bend County women honored by the Suburban Sugar Land Women (SSLW) for Women's History Month 2018.

The National Women's History Project celebrates the diverse and historic accomplishments of women. Every year, SSLW recognizes women who have made a positive impact upon our community. There are six women from Fort Bend County who received this honor—Evelyn Peters Dean, president of the Suburban Houston Fort Bend Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Ammie Blahuta, president of Gigi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers, Tran Pham Rich, president of Cookie Joe's Dancin' School, Sugar Land, Manuela Arroyos, CEO of Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels, Cynthia Ginyard, a passionate retired educator and public servant and Lupe Uresti, former mayor of Rosenberg and current Rosenberg Housing Authority director and treasurer for the board of directors of the Fort Bend Hispanic Heritage Forum. Each of these women contributes to the strength and vibrancy of our community and we thank them.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the Suburban Sugar Land Women honorees. Thank you for all you do for our community.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF JIM WAGNER'S LIFE OF DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE

#### HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2018*

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jim Wagner as he retires from a lifetime of distinguished public service to the Downrivers of Michigan. This week he will retire as Trenton City Administrator, but his service has been long and extensive. He has brought our community together for years through his leadership.

A lifelong resident of Wyandotte, Michigan, Mr. Wagner grew up with a passion to serve