

I have no doubt that when we succeed in building the first National Women's History Museum, MARCY KAPTUR will be prominently represented.

MARCY is an inspiration to women and girls across the country who aspire to lead—who aspire to participate in their democracy.

I am proud to have partnered with her on these and so many other issues, and am thankful for her years of service.

CALLING FOR THE END OF THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR AND FOR PRESIDENT BASHAR AL-ASSAD TO STEP ASIDE

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the seventh anniversary of the Syrian people's demand for democracy, which began on March 15, 2011.

As a senior Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I have watched President Bashar al-Assad commit a catalogue of the most barbaric crimes during seven years of civil war. These include his use of chemical weapons against civilians, his mass imprisonment and murder of his own citizens, and his deliberate shelling of noncombatants. His violence has created a catastrophic refugee crisis, and the death toll from his brutal war is in the hundreds of thousands.

Worse, Russia and Iran have been keen to expand their influence in Syria—no matter the human cost. Not only has Vladimir Putin propped up Assad militarily, but he has provided diplomatic cover for Assad's crimes. Further, Tehran has entrenched itself in Syria by mobilizing and training numerous proxy fighters. This expanded influence undermines American interests, threatens Israel, and further destabilizes the Middle East.

I encourage the Administration to work with Congress and our allies to bring this war to a needed conclusion; one that transitions Syria into a post-Assad future.

TRIBUTE TO GORDON KOKENGE

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Gordon Kokenge of Clarinda, Iowa who recently retired after twenty-eight years of service to the City of Clarinda as a member of the City Council and as Mayor. Gordon was elected in 1988 to the City Council and as Mayor in 2005.

Gordon has served Clarinda with honor, dedication, and with determination to improve the lives of every citizen. During his tenure he has been a leading force in economic development in Clarinda to help develop new industries and help save local companies that have now prospered and expanded. Many citizens in Clarinda supported Gordon because of his insight, knowledge, commitment to the city, and his concern for the city's budget. He has a reputation of working for the good of the

city. Clarinda City Manager Gary McClarnon said, "Gordon has been a very good leader for the city and will be remembered as a great leader for the city during his time as a City Councilman and Mayor."

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Gordon for taking an active role in his community. Gordon's commitment is not only for Clarinda but for all of Southwest Iowa. I am proud to represent him in the United States Congress and I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in congratulating him for his service and wishing him nothing but continued success.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARGARET PERKINS, CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL RECIPIENT

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Margaret Perkins, a Civil Air Patrol volunteer from New York's 21st District who is being honored with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Margaret was born on November 17, 1917, and attended Rochester Institute of Technology, Skidmore College, and Columbia University. After training to fly aircraft at the Lewis Lavery Air School in Round Lake, New York, Margaret received her pilot's license from the Civil Aeronautics Authority in 1943 at only twenty-four years old, and became the first female licensed pilot in Saratoga County. As a member of the Civil Air Patrol during World War II, Margaret flew anti-sabotage missions to ensure the security of dams and other structures. She also shuttled single-engine military observation aircraft between airports at the request of the U.S. Government.

In gratitude and recognition of her service in the Civil Air Patrol during World War II, Margaret is being honored with the Congressional Gold Medal. The Medal is the highest civilian award presented by the U.S. Congress as its highest expression of national appreciation for outstanding contributions.

It is no doubt that Margaret contributed significantly to U.S. success in World War II, and I am extremely proud to rise today in honor of her achievements. New York's 21st District is forever grateful for Margaret's courageous service to her country.

THE SYRIAN SLAUGHTER MUST END

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the past few weeks has brought an unfortunate intensification of the Syrian Civil War as the Syrian government, aided by Russia, continues to bomb rebel-held towns and cities in Syria—including targeting hospitals. This worsening crisis puts even more innocent civilians at risk as the fighting moves closer to heavily populated areas.

We should not make the same mistakes as the Obama administration, whose "strategic

patience" allowed Russia to get a foothold in the Middle East by propping up the brutal dictatorship of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and obstructing peace efforts by the UN Security Council. Putin is knowingly allied with murderers.

That is why I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 1677, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017, which would sanction anyone responsible for hindering access to humanitarian relief in Syria as well as any person who knowingly provides support to the Syrian Government in their attempt to acquire ballistic missiles. The House passed H.R. 1677 last year, and I urge the Senate to pass this bill as well.

In conclusion, God Bless our Troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

HONORING CARLOS CHAIREZ

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Carlos Chairez for his exceptional service to his community and his country.

Mr. Chairez valiantly served his country during World War II as a Private First Class in the United States Army. Mr. Chairez served in the European Theater of war as a member of General Patton's Third Army, Fourth Armored Division. As the war came to a close, his division was converted into the peacekeeping constabulary force. With great confidence and great strength, Mr. Chairez helped create victory and a better world.

Mr. Chairez embraced his country in a time of great need. He went into a perilous domain and fought to preserve democracy and install freedom. He helped to bring peace to a region torn apart by the ravages of war.

Mr. Chairez has been happily married for almost 70 years to his wife Margarita, has 4 children, and 7 grandchildren. His love for his family and country is unparalleled and I deeply admire his dedication, charisma, and willpower. He is an outstanding role model for us all. I am honored and privileged to thank such an extraordinary man. I hope he continues to be a reminder to us all to never forget no sacrifice is too great or small.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LIFELONG IMPROVEMENTS IN FOOD AND EXERCISE ACT OF 2018

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to reintroduce the Lifelong Improvements in Food and Exercise Act, authorizing a national initiative to attack a major health problem in the United States that cannot be remedied through the health care system alone. Increasing rates of overweight and obesity are now found in Americans of every age, race and other major demographic groups, and threaten the health of Americans like no other disease or condition. In fact, the key to eliminating many of the most serious health conditions is

not only to reduce overweight and obesity, but also to encourage exercise of all kinds.

The LIFE Act would provide \$25 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a coordinated national effort to reverse increasingly sedentary lifestyles and diets that are high in fat and sugar. Specifically, my bill seeks to provide the first national strategy to combat the overweight and obesity epidemic by directing the CDC to do three things: train health professionals to recognize the signs of obesity early and to educate people concerning healthy lifestyles, such as proper nutrition and regular exercise; conduct public education campaigns about how to recognize and address overweight and obesity; and develop intervention strategies to be used by the states in everyday life, such as in the workplace and in community settings. This legislation, however, meets the bare minimum for what is needed to address our most important health crisis.

In 2010, estimates from the CDC National Center for Health Statistics showed that since 1980, the percentage of children who are overweight has more than doubled, and the percentage of adolescents who are overweight has tripled. The CDC also reports that Type 2 Diabetes, once considered an adult disease, is now widespread among children. The rising cost of the health care system, including insurance premiums, reflects this epidemic. Today, chronic diseases, many of which are caused or exacerbated by overweight and obesity, account for 70 percent of all deaths in the U.S., and 86 percent of U.S. medical care costs.

A focused national health initiative would provide guidance to the states to engage in similar programs, as mayors of some cities have done. A national focus could lead to changes, such as full participation in high school physical education classes, which dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to 33 percent in 2005. Changes in nutrition are equally critical because more than half of all young people consume too much fat, a factor in the doubling of the percentage of overweight youth. Data also show an increase in unhealthy eating habits for adults and no change in physical activity.

According to a 2017 study conducted by the American College of Sports Medicine, the District of Columbia is one of the fittest cities in the United States and, yet, even here, obesity continues to be a severe problem. Most of the obesity epidemic is exercise-and-food-related. Approximately one-fifth of District residents are considered obese.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation to mobilize the country now before entirely preventable health conditions, which often begin in childhood, overwhelm the nation's health care system.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ROBERT C. SWEENEY

HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Robert C. Sweeney—a bold and courageous community leader, a pioneer for New Jersey workers, and a devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

He will be deeply missed by the entire State of New Jersey, particularly our brothers and sisters in labor for whom he tirelessly advocated throughout his entire life.

Bob was committed to fighting for the working men and women of New Jersey. For twenty-five years, Bob served as President and Business Manager of Local 399 of the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Ironworkers in South Jersey. As the longest-serving business manager in the history of the ironworkers, Bob fought vigorously to defend the labor movement and New Jersey's dedicated workforce. Bob's unflinching values and passionate leadership continue to live on through the steadfast work of his sons—Robert Sweeney, New Jersey Senate President Stephen Sweeney, and New Jersey AFL-CIO Vice President Richard Sweeney.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply grateful for Bob Sweeney's invaluable contributions to our community and our state, and I am confident that his memory will serve as an inspiration for our future generations.

IN RECOGNITION OF GREG COLLINS, GREATER WILKES-BARRE FRIENDLY SONS' MAN OF THE YEAR

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Greg Collins, who will receive the "Man of the Year" Award from the Wilkes-Barre Friendly Sons. He will be honored during the Friendly Sons annual Saint Patrick's Day celebration on Friday, March 16, 2018. Greg has forty years of finance experience and is the former senior vice president and area president of Wells Fargo Bank.

Greg is a native of Kingston, Pennsylvania. After graduating from West Side Central Catholic, he began his career as a teller at Wyoming National Bank. While working as a teller, Greg attended night classes at Misericordia University, majoring in business administration. While working for Wyoming National Bank and its successors, Greg took on more responsibility, taking management positions and eventually advancing to senior leadership roles. From 2009 until his retirement in September 2017, Greg served as Wells Fargo's community bank area president for Northeastern Pennsylvania. He led more than three hundred team members and oversaw the operations of thirty-seven Wells Fargo branch banking offices across nine counties.

Greg remains an active member of the community in his retirement. He is a member of the board of trustees at Misericordia University, a board member of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, Leadership Wilkes-Barre, the Wilkes-Barre YMCA, the Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, and the United Way of Wyoming Valley. In 2015, he chaired the American Heart Association Gala for Northeastern Pennsylvania. He was the recipient of the 2015 North Star Award from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Council Boy Scouts of America, the 2015 Distinguished Leadership Award from Leadership Wilkes-Barre, and the 2015 Community Serv-

ice Award from the Salvation Army. Greg is a 2010 graduate of Leadership Wilkes-Barre's Executive Leadership Program and a 4th-degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

It is an honor to recognize Greg Collins as he accepts the "Man of the Year" Award from the Wilkes-Barre Friendly Sons. I am grateful to him for his forty years of service to the people of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and I thank him for his continued leadership in his community. I wish him all the best on this Saint Patrick's Day.

TRIBUTE TO JEFF BALLENGER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Jeff Ballenger of Council Bluffs, Iowa for his leadership and vision in helping organize 13 honor flights that have taken nearly 3,500 Iowa veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit memorials built in their honor.

Jeff and his father, Bill Ballenger, saw a need to honor our country's aging veterans from World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam War. The Ballengers have partnered with HyVee, Inc., Casey's General Stores, and others to raise more than \$3 million to fund this special endeavor. Jeff said, "It takes nearly 200 volunteers to help make each honor flight a success. Dad and I might be the front, but we could not do it without the volunteers who are so important in turning the plans into a reality."

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Jeff on his dedication and diligence to promote, organize, and fund the 13 honor flights for our Veterans. I am proud to represent him in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Jeff and in wishing him nothing but continued success in all his endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 7TH AN- NIVERSARY OF THE START OF THE SYRIAN WAR

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 7th anniversary of the beginning of the Syrian War.

Since the conflict began in 2011, over 500,000 Syrians have been killed, including 50,000 children by the murderous dictator Bashar al-Assad and his Russian and Iranian backers. These brutal regimes not only target civilians with their artillery strikes, but the Assad regime continues to use chemical weapons, including chlorine gas, to kill his own citizens with impunity.

Over the last 7 years, over 30 chemical weapons attacks have taken place in Syria. Bashar al Assad has used these chemical weapons in clear violation of international law, and against countless resolutions by the United Nations Security Council. The world