

In Congress, this is an area where we work together, the 21st Century Cures Act, where we attacked the first comprehensive approach to mental illness treatment in decades, where we say we want people with mental illness and who need treatment to get it. We worked together most recently on the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act for American veterans, and the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act—small steps, but concrete steps that call attention to suicide, particularly in our veterans community.

The VA is helping on this issue and marked Suicide Prevention Month with its Be There campaign. This campaign highlights the risk factors and warning signs for suicide, provides information about VA mental health and suicide prevention resources, and helps individuals and organizations start the conversation around veteran mental health in their communities.

Our VA employees must have the necessary resources to offer guidance to veterans while providing essential suicide prevention services.

This is a together thing. This is an “all of us in this together” thing.

Mr. Speaker, I have a chair in my front office in my district office in Little Rock that was hand-painted to raise money for suicide awareness and suicide prevention. On that chair, it says: “We Are The 22.” This is a non-profit organization in my community started by veterans helping veterans, because it is not an “us and they” thing. It is an “us” thing. It is a “we” thing.

We are all in this together. We are the 22, the number that we have as the estimate of veterans who are taking their own lives.

So I want to echo the Speaker pro tempore this afternoon, a distinguished American and distinguished veteran and brave, heroic representative of our Armed Forces, our patriots, the people who defend our liberties, when he said we don't leave people behind. We don't leave a sailor, a marine, or a soldier on the battlefield. We bring them home.

Just last week, we honored John McCain on the floor of this House. And SAM JOHNSON, leaving the House this year—Representative SCHWEIKERT was there—he was in the Hanoi Hilton with John McCain. We don't leave a man or woman behind on the battlefield. But when they come home, we equally should not leave them behind.

I really commend the Speaker's comments that the mission is not over. All of us have that partnership and sense of duty to carry that mission forward on the home front when we are out of harm's way and out of theater.

To me, it is that buddy system that we all learn, whether it is in boot camp or swim team, you team up; you check in on each other; you don't leave people alone. That is the secret, I think, to preventing suicide.

I lost a good friend of mine, a fraternity brother, a partner in a law firm in Houston, Texas. He never once inti-

mated to his wife, to his children, or to his law partners that anything was wrong, and they got the call that he had been found.

Check in: How are you doing?

So we are the 22. We are on the buddy system. We don't leave our warriors behind. The mission continues here. All those things are true.

I carry in my wallet, Mr. Speaker, the veterans crisis hotline as a reminder to me that we want our veterans to reach out if there is a moment of crisis.

If somebody is watching this or hearing the words of brave BRIAN MAST, or the emotional content and leadership of Representative KYRSTEN SINEMA from Arizona, and you are having that moment now as a veteran, I urge you to call 1-800-273-8255 for yourself, for a friend, for a neighbor.

We, in Congress, are fighting to make sure that that veterans hotline is a value, that it is answered, and that we are part of that thin thread of connectivity between all of us that keeps us right on the moment.

Mr. Speaker, I see my friend from Arizona is here. It was a pleasure to have both of my friends from Arizona talk about their senior Senator last week, John McCain, and what he meant to each of us and what he has meant to our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), my friend, now on the House Ways and Means Committee, formerly of the best committee in the House, the House Financial Services Committee.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. HILL for yielding. And to the gentlewoman from Arizona, I thank her for doing this every year.

This is one of those moments where you are walking toward the microphone because we just got out of votes in Ways and Means, and you are sort of discussing in your head whether you ultimately tell the personal story. I have two I want to share.

My reason for doing this is, if someone is watching, we have someone in our life, and you are having self-destructive thoughts, please, please reach out, get the help, and understand the devastation that happens and the pain that happens when someone takes their life.

My two stories. When I very first got elected in the Phoenix-Scottsdale area, one of the very first constituent meetings I had was with a mom. Her son had been part of the Phoenix VA. She always felt that the prescriptions he was given put him into an emotional spiral.

They kept trying to get him mental health services. They felt all that he was receiving was more prescriptions and a future date for mental health services. And he took his life.

That mother, the pain, the tears, the crushing blow, what the loss of her son's life meant to that family.

I believe now, a few years later, the Phoenix VA is better. They have

learned a lot, they understand how to be almost a quick reaction force in helping an individual. But we need to make sure these things never happen again.

Now for the personal one that I have never told in public.

□ 1700

I was born in an unwed mothers' home in L.A. I was adopted. It turns out the gentleman who adopted me had multiple sclerosis. But he was a veteran, and he was receiving his medical treatments from VA.

This is a long, long time ago, but this is about the pain that comes when a veteran takes his or her life.

Because of the pharmaceuticals he was given, the lack of emotional counseling, and the failure to properly diagnose his disease, he put himself in a car in a garage, turned on the motor, and took his life. That was my dad.

Some time later, my mother remarried Mr. Schweikert. I got readopted, and I was blessed to grow up in a wonderful household that had brought me to Arizona.

Many years later when I was a young adult, my mom sat me down and told me the story. You could tell there was still that burning hole in her heart of finding her husband, my dad, dead in that car, having taken his own life, believing it was the failure of the very services he was receiving from the VA.

Now it is decades later, and I believe we have learned a lot. This body has tried as hard as it can to get their heads around: Are we allowing too many pharmaceuticals to be prescribed? Are we not providing emotional services? Do we need to put resources into having that communal get-together, the quick reaction force?

I believe it is getting better.

But understand the pain that Mom shared with me when I was first elected about the loss of her son. Even these many, many years later, it is still part of our family's legacy of that pain. If this body can do anything, if we can find ways to make that pain come to an end, then we will have done something very honorable and very powerful.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. HILL for yielding to me.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for participating, and I thank his colleague, Representative SINEMA, for her heartfelt tribute that she has carried on since she has been in the House to bring attention to suicide prevention.

I also commend the House for the efforts that it has taken on mental health and on suicide prevention, particularly for our veterans.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RON ROBINSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 60

minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of one of Arkansas' marketing and public relations geniuses and a dear friend, Mr. Ron Robinson, who recently passed away at the age of 75.

Born and raised in my hometown of Little Rock, Ron had a natural talent for media and journalism at a very young age. As a teenager, he worked as a sports writer for the Arkansas Gazette and was paid \$1 an hour.

After graduating from the University of Arkansas with a degree in journalism, Ron joined the Air Force, serving as a public information officer. He quickly rose to the rank of captain and earned a Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam and the Air Force Commendation Medal in 1969 for his support of the Apollo 11 mission to the Moon.

A year later, he joined Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, CJRW, as director of public relations. He would eventually become chairman and CEO until his retirement in 1996.

Ron received many awards for his contributions to Arkansas and the journalism industry. He was honored in 2005 as a distinguished alumnus of the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences and inducted into the Lemke Journalism Society Hall of Honor in 2016.

Ron was a role model and friend for many across the State of Arkansas, and I extend my respect, affection, and prayers to his friends, his family, and his many, many mentees during his years of service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAVID W. MULLINS, JR.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to honor the life of a longtime work colleague and friend, David W. Mullins Jr., who recently passed away at the age of 72.

David had a remarkable career of public service, including working in both the Department of the Treasury and as a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. It was a pleasure to work with him in Domestic Finance at the Department of the Treasury under President George H.W. Bush.

David's journey began in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where his father was president of the University of Arkansas. David attended Fayetteville High School before graduating from Yale University with a degree in administrative sciences. He then pursued graduate work at MIT, and there he completed his Ph.D. in economics and finance.

David's public service began shortly after the stock market crash in 1987, and his expertise proved vital toward the rejuvenation of the economy and the resolution of the savings and loan crisis under the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Mr. Speaker, he was a thoughtful leader, a friend to many, and I extend my respect, affection, and prayers to his friends, family, and loved ones.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MR. DON ZIMMERMAN

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of one of Arkansas' statewide leaders, Mr. Don Zimmerman, who recently passed away at the age of 75.

Don worked as executive director for the Arkansas Municipal League for over four decades and was there at the time of his death.

A graduate of the University of Arkansas with a degree in business administration, Don first joined the Arkansas Municipal League back in 1966 as a field representative before working his way up to the executive director position in 1974.

Two years ago, he became the first State Municipal League employee to be recognized by the National League of Cities for 50 years of service. Don also served two terms on the board of directors of the National League of Cities.

Mr. Speaker, he was a friend to many across our State of Arkansas, and I extend my respect, affection, and prayers to his friends, family, and loved ones.

RECOGNIZING OLAN WAGES, ONE OF ARKANSAS' FINEST

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize one of Arkansas' finest, Olan Wages, who recently died at the age of 95.

A veteran of the Army, who served in World War II, Olan Wages was at the Battle of the Bulge. Mr. Wages' story is one that makes all Arkansans proud. For his service, he was awarded two Purple Hearts with oakleaf cluster, four Bronze Stars, a Good Conduct Medal, a World War II Commemorative Medal, a Normandy Jubilee of Liberty Medal, and a French Legion of Honor Medal, among others.

Mr. Wages is survived by his three loving daughters, Brenda, Marcia, and Kay.

Mr. Speaker, Olan's example is one all Americans and Arkansans can admire, and I extend my respect, affection, and prayers to his friends, family, and loved ones.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF KEVONTAE CARTER

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the achievements of Kevontae Carter, a junior at Philander Smith College in my hometown of Little Rock. I am pleased to announce that the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities has named him an inaugural Competitiveness Scholar. Competitiveness Scholars are students who have exhibited exceptional academic achievement, engagement with their communities, and an entrepreneurial spirit.

Kevontae, who is majoring in biology and minoring in mathematics, was personally nominated for this honor by Philander's president, Dr. Roderick Smothers. A leader on campus, he serves as a student ambassador for the United Negro College Fund, of which Philander is the only member in the State of Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, I honor Kevontae's commitment to excellence and com-

mend him on being named to this distinguished fellowship.

RECOGNIZING MS. ANNIE ABRAMS

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a lot of pleasure today to recognize a dear friend and a civil rights icon from Arkansas, Ms. Annie Abrams, and wish her a very, very happy 87th birthday.

Ms. Abrams has served her State and country tirelessly throughout her career, from her involvement in the desegregation of Central High School to her role with the Arkansas Teachers Association, including becoming the first African American PTA president at Central High.

Born in Arkadelphia, Ms. Abrams moved to Little Rock at the age of 13 to pursue a better education, and she graduated from Dunbar High School and later Philander Smith College with a degree in special education.

She continues to be involved in many local community service organizations, including the Little Rock Central High Integration 50th Anniversary Commission, a commissioner for the Fair Housing Commission, and treasurer of the Arkansas Democratic Black Caucus.

As a local educator and civic and community leader, Ms. Abrams has enriched the lives of countless Arkansans and Americans. She is the busiest woman I know, particularly for someone on the cusp of an 87th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to our next opportunity to be together, and I thank her for her lifetime of service to our community.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL INTEGRATION

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, 61 years ago today, all eyes were on South Park Street that fronts the beautiful facade of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Just days before, the Arkansas Governor, Orval Faubus, had called out the National Guard to prevent nine Black students from entering that school on September 4.

Central High and its beautiful neighborhood had become ground zero in the march to end the five-decade legacy of Plessy v. Ferguson, separate but equal. Now, just over 3 years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, it was time for action.

In a few days, on the 25th of this month, we will celebrate the successful integration of Central High School when the Little Rock Nine entered the school, escorted by the 101st Airborne Division.

It is fitting today, Mr. Speaker, that we pay tribute to the Little Rock Nine, their defenders, and the successful end to separate but equal. I am proud to recognize this important milestone today on this House floor and remember passing the bill 1 year ago that I authored that expands the park boundary of the National Historic Site at Little Rock Central High School. This is a historic and an important touchstone for all those modern-day history travelers retracing the steps of the civil rights movement.

The National Historic Site Visitor Center was opened in 2007 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Central High's integration. My bill extended the park boundaries to take in the houses that fronted the school along South Park Street so that future generations will be able to picture that street just as it was and reflect on those 21 days of trauma back in 1957.

Bringing the properties into the boundary of the site provides the National Park Service with more tools and flexibility for partnering with the homeowners to historically preserve their front facade and the yards of those homes. Together with the school, the seven homes across the street from Central High will now stand as a living monument to the civil rights movement in Arkansas and the United States.

I want to thank the National Park Service superintendent at that site, Robin White, for her leadership and her persistent work with the community to enhance it as an educational resource and a key stop on the Civil Rights Trail.

The Little Rock Nine's brave actions integrating Little Rock Central High will forever be remembered for their unparalleled role in ending so-called separate but equal. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the 61st anniversary of these brave actions by those young people.

□ 1715

#### RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WOMEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the important accomplishments of women throughout history and to call attention to the millions of women across the globe who lack access to education and are denied access to opportunity.

Small businesses are the engines of our economy in Arkansas and across our entire Nation. They create and support jobs within our local communities and employ approximately half of all private-sector workers in the United States.

According to the Small Business Administration, 30 million small businesses in the U.S. make up over 99 percent of our Nation's businesses; and of those, 11.4 million are women-owned businesses, employing nearly 9 million people. They are centers of innovation, discovery, and opportunity, empowering and equipping Americans for success.

Everyone should have the opportunity to rise, but in America, women entrepreneurs face barriers to certain business resources that many males with similar aspirations don't.

We have got to work hard for our hardworking Americans and our hardworking American families. In Arkansas, Winrock International is doing just that through its Arkansas Women's Business Center. The Arkansas Women's Business Center provides training, counseling, and access to cap-

ital for women who want their business to grow and become competitive.

Though obstacles to entrepreneurship and opportunity also exist outside the U.S., there are entities, including Winrock, supporting solutions that promote prosperity and provide a means for women to flourish around the world.

I had a chance to visit with a very hardworking, enterprising, caring young woman from my hometown of Little Rock, recently, whose innovative efforts were to eradicate hopelessness and give hope to those in poverty by lifting them up and aiding their pursuit of happiness and promoting the fruits of the dignity of work.

Anna Taylor is the founder of the clothing company Judith & James of the nonprofit James127 Foundation. She started her remarkable journey during her family's mission work in Africa.

Inspired by the desire and drive of the Kenyan women she encountered, Anna set out to work with them to ensure that they have the opportunity to provide for their loved ones and themselves. Today, her foundation provides practical and hands-on sewing training to Kenyan widows, offering hope and a future to women whose communities have been ravaged by poverty and disease.

When you empower women, you empower their communities.

For too long, too many young girls and women throughout the world continue to be denied an effective education. We must continue to work to address this injustice and ensure that all women are provided fundamental freedoms in the political, social, cultural, economic, and civic fields.

So I would like to applaud the House on its recent passage of H.R. 5480, the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, and commend my fellow Arkansan, Senator JOHN BOOZMAN, for introducing its companion in the Senate.

As the proud father of a daughter studying hard in college—I hope she is studying hard—I believe that it is critical that we all support all of our aspiring young women. I urge the Senate to act quickly on this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers will continue for the folks who are in harm's way with the hurricane coming ashore. I am grateful for all of those who are serving, State, Federal, and local officials, trying to keep people safe. They will continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.

I am very grateful that President Trump hasn't waited. They mobilized. They have got Federal folks on the ground ready to go.

I am also glad it got downgraded to some extent, but it is still going to be a rough go for folks, their homes, and their goods. So we will continue to remember them. I am grateful for those first responders out there ready to serve.

We just remembered 9/11 this week. Those of us who were old enough to know what happened that day will never forget what happened. We will never forget where we were.

I will never forget the next day, September 12. In my hometown of Tyler, just like in hundreds of thousands of towns and cities around the country, people came together and we prayed together. We sang hymns together. We held hands and sang together. It was a powerful day.

And I will always remember there were people from all different races, ages, both genders, people of all walks of life, but we gathered there in solidarity. What I noticed that day was that there were no hyphenated Americans. We were just Americans. That is what everybody said, and that is what everybody was.

It was an incredible day that an act of sheer hatred, evil, wanting to destroy freedom and the freest country with the best founding document that would allow freedom, they wanted it all destroyed. But there was a lot of love that next day. It is unfortunate that, 17 years later, we don't see that kind of harmony.

It used to be that, in this body, we would disagree, but, as the House rules require, we wouldn't call into question any other elected official's motivation, intentions. We would say we all want what is best for the country. We all want to keep our oath to the Constitution.

But it appears that some don't want to follow those rules anymore. In fact, some of the very people who have been in this room, in the Senate, here in Washington, in front of the press around the country, people who have demanded that the Federal Government get involved and stop bullying at all levels, including threatening, harassing little children in elementary school because the Federal Government felt like it had to intervene and prevent bullies even at such an early age, yet some of those same people who have been calling for Federal intervention to stop bullying have become the biggest bullies in the United States of America.

It is unbelievable how people would be encouraged by elected officials to bully, harass people with whom they disagree. If you can find them in public anywhere, intimidate, scream at them, run them out. Don't let them eat. Don't let them do anything. Don't let them shop. Bully them until you drive them out and you intimidate them so much that they are afraid to express