

is why this walk is being held to remind us all that the struggle continues. Day after day, we must continue to raise the benchmark and ensure that progress toward effective treatment and a cure continue.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my south Florida community to soak up some Sun—safely—on November 3 for a good cause, and participate in the Alzheimer's Association Miami-Dade Walk. Together, we can take the first step in a world without Alzheimer's.

#### RAISING AWARENESS OF ALOPECIA AREATA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize September as Alopecia Areata Awareness Month.

Alopecia areata is an autoimmune disease, resulting in the loss of hair on the body, affecting about 7 million Americans. Additionally, of the 7 million Americans battling alopecia, almost 15 percent—or just over 1 million—are under 12 years of age. This is because alopecia often presents itself at an early stage in life, with no warning and no prevention to be had. It appears on the skin, most often as one or more small, round, smooth patches of hair loss on the scalp, and can progress to total hair loss.

My constituent, Deirdre Nero, first informed me of the effects and seriousness of alopecia. Deirdre, who has alopecia, is a legislative liaison and secretary of the board for the National Alopecia Areata Foundation. Earlier this month, Deirdre and her fellow NAAF participants were on Capitol Hill advocating on behalf of a bill, H.R. 2925, that is called Legislation to Provide Coverage for Wigs As Durable Medical Equipment under the Medicare Program. That bill title says it all.

It is a commonsense reform bill that will make a simple change to the definition of durable medical equipment under the Social Security Act to include cranial prosthetics, alleviating large out-of-pocket expenses for patients.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have championed this cause during my time in Congress, and I am thankful for the work that the National Alopecia Areata Foundation continues to do on behalf of all patients.

Furthermore, I humbly ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in recognizing Alopecia Areata Awareness Month and support this important legislation.

#### COUNTRY ROADS ARE CALLING ME HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I have been blessed these last 4 years to represent the people of West Virginia's Third Congressional District, but now country roads are calling me home.

My State is facing a crisis in our judicial system, and I believe back home

is where I am needed most to best serve the people of West Virginia. This Sunday, I will be stepping down from the people's House to serve as a justice beginning Monday on our State Supreme Court.

We are proud West Virginians, always working to make sure the State we love is the very best it can be, and taking care of one another when times are tough. In Congress, I have tried to use that Mountain State can-do spirit to help West Virginia grow and prosper. Here are just a few examples.

Helping newborn babies. We have worked to help the most innocent victims of the drug crisis: newborn babies exposed to drugs during pregnancy. The cry of a precious, tiny baby suffering through withdrawal is heart-breaking. We were able to cut through Federal red tape and pass legislation, signed by the President, so facilities like Lily's Place can help children get a healthy start in life.

Protecting miner's healthcare. Our government made a promise to our miners: You go into the bowels of the Earth, mine the coal that fuels our Nation, forge the steel that won world wars, and we will guarantee you a secure healthcare benefit. We kept that promise, passing legislation protecting healthcare for our retirees and their widows.

As go the roads, so go the jobs. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I helped fund the FAST Act, bringing \$2.5 billion of funding just to West Virginia. Now, we are fixing our roads and bridges, and investing in water and sewer infrastructure, transitioning the West Virginia economy. We are bringing broadband to our State in rural parts.

Growing more jobs. My motto is a good job solves a lot of problems. You can feel hope and opportunity returning to the hills of West Virginia. In fact, our 2017 economic growth rate was one of the highest in the country.

I will never forget standing in the Oval Office with President Trump, surrounded by our hardworking coal miners, as he signed the legislation I helped pass that saved one-third of all coal mining jobs in America. Coal trains are full again and paychecks are back in workers' pockets.

This has truly been a team effort. I want to thank the incredible staff for their hard work and dedication to our constituents. We have handled over 5,000 constituent service requests these last 4 years.

We were able to help people like Wetzel Sanders, a true American hero. Wetzel was a corporal in the Army and was injured in the attack on Pearl Harbor. He took shrapnel to the knee, was bandaged, and went back into the fight. He is now 95 years old, and I was able to present him with a much-deserved Purple Heart he should not have had to wait 76 years to receive.

We have also helped people through some of their most difficult times. In a matter of hours in late June 2016, 23

people lost their lives and hundreds of homes were destroyed. Thousands of residents were left with nothing but the clothes on their backs, due to devastating floods. We worked hard to help our residents recover and rebuild to get their lives headed back in the right direction.

Let me reassure the people of the Third Congressional District, my dedicated staff will continue to serve the people of West Virginia, and our constituent service won't skip a beat.

Mr. Speaker, I thank West Virginia House Members, my fellow colleagues, DAVID MCKINLEY and ALEX MOONEY, and Senator CAPITO and Senator MANCHIN for the opportunity to serve and work with them. They are dedicated public servants.

I will miss hosting middle school students late at night, right here on the House floor, talking about the greatness of our country, and sharing a quiet moment with our heroes on an honor flight from back home at our war memorials here in Washington.

I will not miss sleeping on a \$99 cot each night these past 4 years in my office here in Washington, but I was never here in Washington to get settled in.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, E.B., and our children, Hollin, Charles, and Olivia, for supporting me each and every step of the way. They have been incredibly patient and understanding about the time public service has taken from our family time. I love them very much.

Again, I thank the citizens of the Third Congressional District for the opportunity to serve them in the United States House of Representatives.

God bless America and God bless West Virginia.

#### RECOGNIZING KIDS' ORCHESTRA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the nonprofit organization Kids' Orchestra for the positive impact it has had on the children throughout East Baton Rouge Parish.

Kids' Orchestra is located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and is one of the largest after school programs for elementary schools in the entire United States. The program began in 2011 with 30 students from a few local schools. Now, 800 students from 21 schools participate each year, learning a musical instrument, performing in an ensemble, and/or singing in the choir.

Kids' Orchestra uses music as a way to teach students valuable lessons, both in and out of the classroom. Ultimately, they are successful, as 82 percent of their students say they feel more confident, part of the team, and like they are good at something after completing the program. Teachers and parents also see improvements in peer

interaction, self-confidence, school attendance, and classroom behavior from the participating students.

These benefits translate academically also, as, on average, Kids' Orchestra students receive 15 percent higher grades than students who do not participate in the program.

The organization also aims to create a strong sense of community between the children from all different backgrounds, different neighborhoods, and different schools. Each class contains 25 students of varying ages, schools, and skill levels, all brought together for weekly lessons and regular performances.

By forming a community based on musical training and enrichment, Kids' Orchestra is making a positive impact on neighborhood schools and individual students.

I am proud to have had this program in Louisiana, and I look forward to seeing the positive impacts from the organization for many, many years to come.

#### CELEBRATING NATIONAL RICE MONTH

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate September as National Rice Month.

Very few places in the world take their rice as seriously as Louisiana, where we produced 2.7 billion pounds of rice just last year.

Rice is also a huge economic driver for the United States, as rice milling operations generate about \$6 billion in wages and business profits, according to the LSU AgCenter.

U.S. rice not only puts food on our tables, but also on tables across the world. We contribute 5 percent of the total rice exports in food aid to developing nations. This is the kind of international contribution our rice producers can be proud of.

In turn, I am proud to represent the hardworking rice farmers across Louisiana. They produce high-quality rice that feeds the world, gives jobs to their neighbors, and helps the community. These facts alone make rice worth celebrating all month long.

#### BATTLING THE WILDFIRES THAT PLAGUE CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the thousands of firefighters who, each year, put their lives at risk to battle wildfires like those that have plagued California and other western States. We owe it to them, as well as to the American people, to use every measure available to fight fires in ways that reduce the risk to those firefighters and the risk of losing lives and property among our population.

Just in the last year, and that is in 2018, wildfires in California burned 1,117,000 acres. Nationally, there was 6.5 million acres burned. In California, we

had six fatalities. Nationally, there were 16 fatalities. California property losses were 2,356 houses—those are people's homes—and 1,239 nonresidential buildings.

On that note, today, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues and the American people to what I consider to be an inexcusable roadblock that is stopping the implementation of new, innovative, and tested effective firefighting technology.

In 2008, I helped secure funding for research and testing of the technology that ultimately became Precision Containerized Aerial Delivery System, or PCADS.

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It was designed specifically for military aircraft, including the C-17s and the C-130s and others as well. It has been tested over the years and proven to deliver massive amounts of water or fire retardant onto fires using GPS and other expertise. It is safer, more accurate, and much more effective than traditional aerial firefighting.

Yet a decade later, this technology has not been put to use despite the Air National Guard's report determining that the PCADS are operationally effective and appropriate for the use of C-130 firefighting aircraft or military aircraft that can be made for firefighting. This has been deemed operational, yet for the last 8 months, while we have lost all of these homes and all of these lives, hundreds of these aircraft, C-130s and C-17s, have sat on the tarmac.

This aircraft was designed for military use, but without modification, can save the lives and homes of American citizens throughout this country who are victimized by wildfires and other types of fires. The primary responsibility of our government is to protect the lives of our people with the best available tools, and it is certainly not doing so.

I include in the RECORD, Mr. Speaker, letters that I have written to the Director of our Air National Guard; to Secretary Mattis, the Secretary of Defense; and to Heather Wilson, the Secretary of the Air Force.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
August 30, 2018.

Lt. Gen. L. SCOTT RICE,  
Director, Air National Guard,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR GENERAL RICE: I draw your attention to our military's bureaucratic inertia that has led to a needless loss of life and a tremendous loss of property. I am referring to the vast damage caused in the Western United States, specifically California, by out-of-control wildfires which have plagued the region for the last few months. This loss of life and property could have been dramatically curtailed had our military acted upon an option that was, and is, readily available.

Our inventory of C-130 and C-17 aircraft, with inexpensive and slight interior modifications, could be used as a major firefighting asset that could make a major difference. Instead, these potential incredible firefighting assets sat as California burned.

Using these aircraft as valuable firefighting assets would not involve any alteration of the aircraft. This option however has been available and ignored.

I call your attention to the Precision Container Aerial Delivery System (PCADS). I helped win Congressional approval in the 2008 appropriations bill wherein \$2.3 million was provided for the research and testing of this system. It is ten years later, and I am frustrated that it has not been used to protect our citizens, our homes, our businesses, and our wildlands.

The Air National Guard determined that PCADS is operationally effective and is appropriate for C-130 firefighting. The final report on PCADS that found it to be a reliable option was released in January 2018, yet seven months later there has been no action taken to deploy the system. During those seven months, we have suffered 109 large fires which have burned 1.9 million acres, caused 16 fire fatalities, and destroyed 2,356 houses. During this time, our C-130's and C-17's equipped with this system could have had a major impact on these fires. This is utterly unacceptable when we have a proven technology that responds faster and delivers massive quantities of water and fire retardant with GPS directed drops in contrast to the status quo. Furthermore, military transport aircraft can be rapidly and easily reloaded with water or fire retardant as compared to any other system. When the American people discover how bureaucratic intransigence has caused such preventable wildfire damage they will be justifiably outraged.

Today, I am demanding that actions be taken upon receipt of this letter to facilitate the use of this simple and inexpensive technology which will easily turn our inventory of C-130's and C-17's into firefighting water and fire-retardant bombers.

I hope you will take this letter seriously enough in order to prevent even more damage in the state of California and elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

DANA ROHRBACHER (CA 48),  
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
August 30, 2018.

Hon. JAMES N. MATTIS,  
Secretary of Defense,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY MATTIS: I draw your attention to our military's bureaucratic inertia that has led to a needless loss of life and a tremendous loss of property. I am referring to the vast damage caused in the Western United States, specifically California, by out-of-control wildfires which have plagued the region for the last few months. This loss of life and property could have been dramatically curtailed had our military acted upon an option that was, and is, readily available.

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