

needed to be well educated and passed this belief onto his children.

To be black and well educated required that the Davis family find schools beyond the small, rural, operations for black children that existed at the time. Ressie attended high school at Jackson in Corsicana. Jackson was the designated school in town for black students during the era of segregation in Texas. Ressie's family left Rice and moved to where she met the love of her life, Robert March English.

She and Dr. English, 'Bob', married in the spring of 1939, and a few years later had their first child, a daughter named, Mary LlaBetta. By the time a second daughter, Lizzie Elizabeth Janet arrived, the family was living in the bustling town of Mineral Wells, Texas, and Dr. English had become an established young and dynamic Baptist minister working in Jacksboro, Texas.

Dr. English soon became vice-moderator and later moderator of the West Texas District Baptist Association. His ministry flourished, but the need for better medical resources dictated a return to Corsicana. They later added to the family daughters Doris Theresa, "SanDei", and Eva Carolyn and their two sons, Robert James and Joseph Hart-Davis English.

Ressie settled into her role of minister's wife working as a homemaker and running her household with great diligence. She agreed to move to Fort Worth with the caveat that if the church was to be in Lake Como, housing had to be found within walking distance to Como elementary school. Her last three children, Constance Grace, John Moses and Rubye DeiGratia were born in Lake Como. Fully settled in Fort Worth, all nine of the children graduated from or attended Como senior high school.

The English's were well regarded in the Lake Como community, unwavering in their commitment to the church, and steadfast in overseeing the activities of their nine children. The children participated in everything the school had to offer. Ressie made sure her children became fixtures in the recreational and academic setting in the Como community; from piano lessons to track and football, to the PTA, Drama and Debate Club to the National Honors Society, they did it all.

After the establishment of the first church commissioned by the West Texas Baptist Association, Ressie became "First Lady" of another church, independently established by her husband. They named it Mount Moriah Baptist Church. Dr. English guided this church until his death in 1987. Ressie always put God and family first, and in her spare time, she enjoyed gardening and harvesting fruit and vegetables at her Lake Como home. Trips to the now obsolete retailers, Handy Dan and Sutherland's, were her favorite places to buy outdoor and home improvement items. While she did enjoy fresh food; she never turned down a good Breakfast Jack or a two-piece meal from Churches on Lackland and Camp Bowie.

In addition to gardening, Ressie was also very handy at sewing; and always kept a machine, which she was very proud of, nestled near a corner window in her dining room. But most importantly Ressie enjoyed studying the Bible, and for most of her 106 years, she could quote scripture and the words of Jesus Christ with remarkable accuracy and clarity. She oftentimes hummed church hymns while knitting, reading, or working outdoors.

And her memory allowed her to be a master storyteller of days long gone. The summer of 2018 marked 106 years in the life of Ressie Davis English. On January 18, 2019, she went home to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We celebrate her life today with these words forever enshrined into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of the United States House of Representatives, where her grandson Marc Veasey serves. She was preceded in death by her husband Dr. Robert English and three children Mary LlaBetta Sowels, Robert James English and Joseph Hart English, and two granddaughters.

Her legacy continues through her children, Elizabeth English Burky, Doris Theresa English, Eva Carolyn English-Clay, Constance English Cash, John Moses English and Charley Rubye English-Carter. She is also survived by many grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Her kids and grandchildren have gone on to work in broadcasting, higher education, politics, the food and beverage industry, and many other endeavors of hard work and accomplishment of which Mrs. English was very proud.

I wish Mrs. English peace and my deepest condolences to Congressman VEASEY and his family.

IN RECOGNITION OF DOUBLE OAK
TOWN SECRETARY CHARLOTTE
ALLEN

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the exemplary career of Mrs. Charlotte Allen, who will retire from her position as Town Secretary of Double Oak, Texas on February 1, 2019. The town has benefited immensely from her 17 years of devoted service to its citizens and Town Council.

Before beginning her tenure in Double Oak on April 2, 2002, Mrs. Allen served in various public service roles, including Town Secretary for Copper Canyon and City Secretary for Denton. She is well known for her dedication, work ethic, and reliability by colleagues and those she has mentored. Thanks to her hard work, the town of Double Oak has operated efficiently and reliably—a significant benefit to its citizens.

I am grateful for Charlotte Allen's contributions to the town of Double Oak, and I wish her all the best in the chapters ahead.

HONORING CHRIS LARSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Chris Larson. Chris is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Chris has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the

many years Chris has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Chris contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project at the Earnest Shepherd Memorial Youth Center outside Liberty, Missouri.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Chris Larson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING AN OP-ED WRITTEN
BY MR. BILL PASCRELL

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share an excellent op-ed written by my colleague Mr. BILL PASCRELL, entitled, "Why is Congress so dumb?" In this lucid essay, Rep. PASCRELL discusses the systematic demolition of Congress' power to assemble accurate information, conduct investigations and develop sound policy. It is an imperative of the 116th Congress that we rebuild Congressional capacity to govern with the information we need. In his piece, which appeared in the Washington Post, Mr. PASCRELL writes:

In a year of congressional low lights, the hearings we held with Silicon Valley leaders last fall may have been the lowest. One of my colleagues in the House asked Google CEO Sundar Pichai about the workings of an iPhone—a rival Apple product. Another colleague asked Facebook head Mark Zuckerberg, "If you're not listening to us on the phone, who is?" One senator was flabbergasted to learn that Facebook makes money from advertising. Over hours of testimony, my fellow members of Congress struggled to grapple with technologies used daily by most Americans and with the functions of the Internet itself. Given an opportunity to expose the most powerful businesses on Earth to sunlight and scrutiny, the hearings did little to answer tough questions about the tech titans' monopolies or the impact of their platforms. It's not because lawmakers are too stupid to understand Facebook. It's because our available resources and our policy staffs, the brains of Congress, have been so depleted that we can't do our jobs properly.

Americans who bemoan a broken Congress rightly focus on ethical questions and electoral partisanship. But the tech hearings demonstrated that our greatest deficiency may be knowledge, not cooperation. Our founts of independent information have been cut off, our investigatory muscles atrophied, our committees stripped of their ability to develop policy, our small staffs overwhelmed by the army of lobbyists who roam Washington. Congress is increasingly unable to comprehend a world growing more socially, economically and technologically multifaceted—and we did this to ourselves. When the 110th Congress opened in 2007, Democrats rode into office on a tide of outrage at the George W. Bush administration and the Republican Congress, which had looked the other way during the Tom DeLay, Jack Abramoff and Duke Cunningham scandals. My colleagues and I focused our energies on exposing corruption. But we missed crucial

opportunities to reform the institution of Congress. As my party assumes a new majority in the House, we confront similar circumstances and have a second chance to begin the hard work of nursing our chamber back to strength.

Our decay as an institution began in 1995, when conservatives, led by then-Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), carried out a full-scale war on government. Gingrich began by slashing the congressional workforce by one-third. He aimed particular ire at Congress's brain, firing 1 of every 3 staffers at the Government Accountability Office, the Congressional Research Service and the Congressional Budget Office. He defunded the Office of Technology Assessment, a tech-focused think tank. Social scientists have called those moves Congress's self-lobotomy, and the cuts remain largely unreversed.

Gingrich's actions didn't stop with Congress's mind: He went for its arms and legs, too, as he dismantled the committee system, taking power from chairmen and shifting it to leadership. His successors as speaker have entrenched this practice. While there was a 35 percent decline in committee staffing from 1994 to 2014, funding over that period for leadership staff rose 89 percent.

This imbalance has defanged many of our committees, as bills originating in leadership offices and K Street suites are forced through without analysis or alteration. Very often, lawmakers never even see important legislation until right before we vote on it. During the debate over the Republicans' 2017 tax package, hours before the floor vote, then-Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) tweeted a lobbying firm's summary of GOP amendments to the bill before she and her colleagues had had a chance to read the legislation. A similar process played out during the Republicans' other signature effort of the last Congress, the failed repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Their bill would have remade one-sixth of the U.S. economy, but it was not subject to hearings and was introduced just a few hours before being voted on in the dead of night. This is what happens when legislation is no longer grown organically through hearings and debate.

Congress does not have the resources to counter the growth of corporate lobbying. Between 1980 and 2006, the number of organizations in Washington with lobbying arms more than doubled, and lobbying expenditures between 1983 and 2013 ballooned from \$200 million to \$3.2 billion. A stunning 2015 study found that corporations now devote more resources to lobby Congress than Congress spends to fund itself. During the 2017 fight over the tax legislation, the watchdog group Public Citizen found that there were more than 6,200 registered tax lobbyists, vs. 130 aides on the Senate Finance Committee and the Joint Committee on Taxation, a staggering ratio approaching 50-to-1 disfavoring the American people. In 2016 in the House, there were just 1,300 aides on all committees combined, a number that includes clerical and communications workers. Our expert policy staffs are dwarfed by the lobbying class.

The practical impact of this disparity is impossible to overstate as lobbyists flood our offices with information on issues and legislation—information on which many lawmakers have become reliant. Just a few weeks ago, at the end of the session, I witnessed the biennial tradition of departing members of Congress relinquishing their suites to the incoming class. As lawmakers emptied their desks and cabinets, the office hallways were clogged with dumpsters overflowing with reports, white papers, massaged data and other materials, a perfect illustration of the proliferating junk dropped off by lobbyists.

Congress remade its committees in the 1970s to challenge Richard Nixon's presidency and move power to rank-and-file lawmakers. Many segregationist chairmen were ousted and replaced by reformers, and committees and subcommittees were given flexibility to study issues under their purview. It's no accident that some of the most significant legislation and oversight by Congress—Title IX; the Clean Water Act; the Watergate, Pike and Church hearings—came from this period. Congress had strengthened its pillars, hired smart people and accessed the best information available.

Following the reforms of the 1970s, the House held some 6,000 hearings per year. But eventually, the number of House hearings fell—from a tick above 4,000 in 1994 to barely more than 2,000 in 2014. On the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, of which I am a member, oversight hearings are virtually nonexistent, as is developing legislation. We had no hearings in 2017 on the bill that would dramatically rewrite our tax code. And in the last Congress, we didn't haul in any administration officials for a single public hearing on the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Assessing this state of affairs in a 2017 report, the Congressional Management Foundation noted that committees "have been meeting less often than at almost any other time in recent history." This neglect has become the norm. Instead, leadership, lobbyists and the White House decide how to solve policy problems.

Indeed, Congress has allowed the White House to dominate policymaking. Trade is a perfect illustration. Despite our current president's braggadocio, most Americans would be surprised to learn ultimate trade power rests with Congress. But over and over we've willingly, even eagerly, handed off that responsibility given to us by Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. President Trump's power to renegotiate NAFTA was granted by Congress, as was his power to issue tariffs, allowed under the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. I disagreed with the decision in 2015 to give President Barack Obama—a member of my own party—fast track power to advance the Trans-Pacific Partnership. During that debate, I sat stupefied as some members of our committee sought to award not only Obama but also future, unknown executives an extended and open-ended authority to make other deals. Congress was prepared to simply abdicate our job.

Perhaps the most striking instance of political interference I've seen in my career occurred in the Ways and Means Committee in 2014. Then-Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.) had toiled for months with Democrats, Republicans and budget experts to craft a comprehensive tax reform bill. I may not have loved the final product, but I respected the process. Republican leadership killed the proposal almost immediately after it was unveiled. The reason? They wanted to deny Obama a legislative accomplishment.

For decades, nearly every piece of legislation would reach the floor via committee, but beginning in the 1990s, the rate began to drop. In the 113th Congress, approximately 40 percent of big-ticket legislation bypassed committees. Before 1994, Camp would have informed the speaker of his proposal and brought it to the floor. Now, a chairman has much less power to realize meaningful legislation. Meanwhile, longstanding House rules have essentially blocked the amendment process on the floor, meaning bills can't be modified by members of the wider chamber.

In addition to committee weakness, House lawmakers collectively employ fewer staffers today than they did in 1980. Between 1980 and 2016, when the U.S. population rose by nearly 97 million people and districts grew by 40

percent on average (about 200,000 people per seat), the number of aides in House member offices decreased, to 6,880, and total House staff increased less than 1 percent, to 9,420.

The first lobe of Congress's brain we can bulk back up is the Congressional Research Service. The CRS provides studies from talented experts spanning law, defense, trade, science, industry and other realms. Some of our greatest oversight triumphs—Watergate, Iran-contra, the Freedom of information Act—were achieved with the CRS's support. Great nations build libraries, and much of the CRS is housed in the Library of Congress's Madison Building.

But the CRS has become a political target. In 2012, a CRS report finding that tax cuts do not generate revenue enraged my Republican colleagues, who had the report pulled and began browbeating CRS experts. According to figures supplied by the CRS, the next year, the service saw its funding cut by \$5 million, nearly 5 percent, recovering to previous levels only in 2015. (The CRS did get big funding bumps in recent years.)

The Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office, crown jewels of our body that provide nonpartisan budget projections, are similarly ignored or maligned for partisan purposes. Last year, when the CBO debunked claims that the GOP tax plan would create jobs, Republicans savaged the agency instead of improving the law. It reminded one of my colleagues, Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.), of an episode of *The Simpsons* in which Springfield residents, rescued from a hurtling comet, resolve to raze the town observatory.

The GAO also furnishes rich information to Congress on virtually any subject. Last year I requested and obtained a study on the live-events ticket market. It was a probing report with fresh data. Former senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), one of the most conservative lawmakers of the past generation, praised the GAO, estimating that every dollar of funding for the agency potentially saved Americans \$90. Nonetheless, from 1980 to 2015, GAO staffing was cut by one-fifth. While I never had the pleasure of collaborating with the Office of Technology Assessment, its reputation is legendary. Like the GAO, it operated as a think tank for Congress, tasked with studying science and technology issues. The OTA was Congress's only agency solely conducting scholarly work on these issues until Gingrich disemboweled it. Today, few members of Congress know it ever existed. The congressional hearings on big tech showcased my colleagues' inability to wrap their heads around basic technologies. But our challenges don't stop at Silicon Valley. Biomedical research, CRISPR, space exploration, artificial intelligence, election security, self-driving cars and, most pressingly, climate change are also on Congress's plate.

And we are functioning like an abacus seeking to decipher string theory. By one estimate, the federal government spends \$94 billion on information technology, while Congress spends \$0 on independent assessments of technology issues. We are crying out for help to guide our thinking on these emerging areas. I have backed motions to bring the OTA back to life, and I was heartened last year when the House Appropriations Committee approved funding for a study on the feasibility of a new OTA.

The creation in the House rules of a Select Committee for the Modernization of Congress in this new I session is a terrific beginning—and a signal that Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) understand the importance of these issues. Providing capital and staff to the institution should be a major priority in the 116th Congress. The

budgets we approve fund 445 executive departments, agencies, commissions and other federal bodies. But for every \$3,000 the United States spends per American on government programs, we allocate only \$6 to oversee them.

After decades of disinvesting in itself, Congress has become captured by outside interests and partisans. Lawmakers should be guided by independent scholars, researchers and policy specialists. We must recognize our difficulties in comprehending an impossibly complex world. Undoing the mindless destruction of 1994 will take a lot of effort, but with investment, we can make Congress work again.

IN RECOGNITION OF 100 YEARS OF
THE THIEL FAMILY REAL ES-
TATE AND AUCTION BUSINESS

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. GALLAGHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the 100-year anniversary of Thiel family auctioneers. Started in 1919, the Thiel Real Estate and Auction business still operates today in Northeast Wisconsin.

100 years ago, Andrew Thiel started his family auction business out of his home in Chilton, Wisconsin. Continuing his father's legacy, Andrew's son Randolph took over the company until he retired at the age of 81. Following his retirement, Andrew's son Jerry took over and continued to expand the business from auctions to also include the real estate and appraisal businesses. Jerry joined the Wisconsin Realtors Association and the Calumet County Board of Realtors, where he served as a board member and president for many years. In 1988, Jerry Thiel was named Calumet County Realtor of the Year, and is currently a member of the Wisconsin Realtor Honor Society.

The Thiel Real Estate and Auctions business is the oldest family-owned business and the largest appraisal business in Calumet County. And, the family tradition continues today. Fourth and fifth generation Thiel family members, including Jerry's four children and many grandchildren, are actively involved in the business.

This 100-year accomplishment is significant and inspirational. The Thiel family exemplifies the best qualities of Northeast Wisconsin and I am proud to represent such a dedicated, innovative, and hardworking family.

Madam Speaker, I ask that the Members of the House of Representatives join me in congratulating the Thiel family for their 100 years of success in Northeast Wisconsin.

HONORING ALEX TRISCHLER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Alex Trischler. Alex is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy

Scouts of America, Troop 1376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Alex has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Alex has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Alex has led his troop as a Patrol Leader, become a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow, and holds the rank of Brave in the tribe of Mic-O-Say. Alex has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Alex created an extension and beautification of a memorial garden for Second Baptist Church in Liberty, Missouri. Alex and his fellow Scouts and Scouters donated 201 service hours for this beautiful project.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Alex Trischler for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING JUDGE JOHN PAYTON
FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE

HON. VAN TAYLOR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. John Edward Payton for his twenty-eight years of dedicated service to Collin County, Texas.

A graduate of Plano East Senior High School in Collin County, Texas, John Payton was first elected to the position of Collin County Justice of the Peace for Precinct 3 in 1990. Payton had the distinction of serving as the youngest ever elected Judge in Texas, an accolade recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records. John would go on to earn Magna Cum Laude honors at Collin College, where he would also achieve recognition for his role on the USA TODAY Academic All-American team and as a member of Phi Beta Kappa International Honor Society.

His many contributions to our community include his mentorship of at-risk students who benefitted from his steadfast leadership and compassion. More than twenty years ago, Payton realized the need to assist youth by providing community service opportunities through the creation of the Students on Service Community Service Program. Countless lives have been changed by the opportunities presented for these youths to contribute to their community in meaningful ways resulting in an impressive 500,000 plus hours of service to the community. Judge Payton would often spend his weekends with students building homes through Habitat for Humanity or teaching local youth how to operate a farm or greenhouse. John truly built communities in the deepest sense.

Judge Payton's contributions to the community are numerous, earning him an array of awards and recognitions from respected colleagues and organizations throughout Collin County. On a personal level, John might tout his greatest accomplishment as serving as a loving husband to Shea and a proud father to Katarina.

Judge John Payton's servant leadership and efforts to provide a constant and strong com-

munity support structure for our youth are to be commended. He is particularly to be praised for his unwavering belief that through committed involvement with our youth, we can build the future.

It has been an honor to know and work with Mr. John Edward Payton over the years. As Judge Payton begins this next chapter of his life, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating him for his selfless service to the youth and residents of Collin County. Semper Fidelis.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 100TH AN-
NIVERSARY OF THE COMMIS-
SIONERS OF THE REVENUE AS-
SOCIATION OF VIRGINIA

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the Commissioners of the Revenue Association of Virginia, a well-reputed organization that has spent the past century providing counseling on tax policy and its application.

The Commissioners of Revenue began providing counsel to the Virginia General Assembly, the Commonwealth, her agencies and departments, and local governments on January 1, 1919. Since their formation, they have played an integral role in the history of Virginia, being involved in both the registration of our Commonwealth's first female voters and their support for the elimination of segregation within real and personal property tax assessment books.

The Virginia Commissioners of Revenue is made up of 127 individuals who are the chief assessing officers of their localities. They do irreplaceable work assessing property values, issuing business licenses, state income tax filing assistance, as well as further work within their respective areas. They serve as invaluable resources for the citizens of Virginia's First District, and I cannot thank them enough for the hard work they do every day.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Commissioners of the Revenue Association of Virginia. I proudly thank the men and women who serve as Virginia's Commissioners for their dedication to our Commonwealth and their work. May God bless the operations of the Commissioners of the Revenue Association of Virginia, and I look forward to seeing their continued excellence.

HONORING MARCUS DAWAYNE
WILSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Marcus Dawayne Wilson. Marcus is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 283 and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.