

maintain, and improve our Federal highways, especially lifesaving safety improvements.

Together, we can find a solution to the safety hazard that U.S. Highway 12 poses, and together, we will.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MINNESOTA
WHITECAPS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, this March, during the National Hockey League's Gender Equality Month, I want to congratulate the Minnesota Whitecaps for making it to the National Women's Hockey League playoffs.

Not everyone can play professional sports, but everyone can participate at some level. Sports are a great training ground for life. Lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, how to handle adversity are all important to the development of productive, contributing citizens in a civil society.

Professional women athletes play a large role in the development of girls hockey in communities across the country, but especially the Minnesota hockey community.

We are lucky to have inspiring players turn coaches that mentor the next generation of female hockey players and great Americans.

I know the entire Minnesota hockey world is proud of the Whitecaps.

Congratulations on your success, and good luck in the playoffs.

HEALTHPARTNERS RECOGNIZED FOR SERVING
THE UNDERSERVED

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize HealthPartners for receiving the 2019 CMS Health Equity Award from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

This award recognizes organizations that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to serving the most underserved individuals among us.

HealthPartners has locations throughout Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District, which I am honored to represent in this Congress.

HealthPartners is committed to eliminating healthcare disparities for those with language, cultural, and other barriers.

I am pleased to congratulate this outstanding company for receiving this well-deserved award.

I hope other healthcare providers will take note of the small changes that can make a big difference in eliminating bias in the distribution of healthcare services.

SUPPORTING STATE AND LOCAL
TAX DEDUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, tax day is approaching on April 15, and I again rise to state my support for the State and local tax deduction.

There were many positive aspects to the tax bill that I voted against.

I support reducing the corporate tax rate, but it should not have been done

by increasing personal taxes on any hardworking middle-income Long Islander in my district.

The \$10,000 cap that was made to the SALT deduction was a punch in the gut to middle-class taxpayers in my district.

There were positive aspects, as I said, of the tax bill: expanding the medical expense deduction, preserving education and student deductions, doubling the child tax credit, the AMT changes.

And as I stated, changing the corporate tax rate helps make the United States more competitive globally, to improve our business climate, to help create more jobs, but it should not be done by raising taxes on the personal income side.

I have been working closely with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address this issue. I have been working with Democratic Representative JOSH GOTTHEIMER of New Jersey. I cosponsor legislation between PETER KING, a Republican, and TOM SUOZZI, a Democrat, H.R. 257. NITA LOWEY introduced a bill that I cosponsor, H.R. 188.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues in this Chamber to work together to address this important issue, because it is important to deliver tax relief to all Americans.

Now, I do have an important message, though, to the Governor of New York, the mayor of New York City, those who are running State and local governments in States like mine. The reason why our State and local tax deduction was as high as it was is because our State and local taxes are as high as they are.

So everybody needs to look in the mirror and figure out what we can do to do our part, because all levels of government need to deliver tax relief.

My home State of New York has some of the highest taxes in the entire country. It is ranked as the second worst State in the entire Nation to do business. You couple that with the loss of the SALT deduction, and it has only sped up the amount of businesses and individuals who are choosing to leave our State.

It was very upsetting to see an effort by elected officials, some here in Congress, others in the State legislature to push away 25,000 good-paying Amazon jobs that would have been coming to Long Island City.

Now, we all must do our part. The State and local tax deduction has been around in some way since, you could say, Abraham Lincoln's administration. He used the State and local tax deduction to help keep this union together and fight the Civil War.

It was a tough debate a little over a year ago now when the tax law was passed through both Chambers and signed by the President, but next month, as April 15 approaches and people have to pay their taxes, they are going to be seeing less in their return, many will be seeing less in their return where I am from. Some will be getting more, and that is great.

I didn't oppose this bill because all of my constituents were going to see a tax increase. It was that too many were going to see a tax increase.

Now, all, when they are getting their tax return need to understand that throughout the year, money was added to their paycheck because of a change in the way that taxes were calculated with withholdings through the year. So that is something else to factor in when trying to figure out the impact of the tax bill. Again, some people will be seeing less that they owe, others will be seeing more.

In this Chamber, in the halls of the New York State capitol, in the halls of State capitols everywhere, in city halls, in county and town governments all throughout America, we all need to do our part to deliver tax relief.

□ 1030

Because at all levels of government, really, it is not a revenue issue that has been leading to the situation that we face as a country and in our local governments. It has been an expenditure issue.

Whether you could save a dollar, a million dollars, a billion dollars, wherever you can find money to save, we need to get better at how we tax and spend the people's money. We need to spend it as if it is our own.

Mr. Speaker, there is a message here to my colleagues in this Chamber. I ask for their support of this legislation, multiple bills that have been introduced. I make that plea to the Senate, to the administration, and also to all those representatives of State and local governments responsible for the fact that the reason our deduction was as high as it was, was because our State and local taxes were as high as they were. But we need to do our part here in this Chamber.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FORMER
CONGRESSMAN RALPH HALL

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, on March 7 of this year, 6 days ago, we lost our colleague Ralph Hall.

Ralph's journey among us here in Congress and our world started on May 3, 1923, in a town called Fate, Texas. Never in American history has a town of birth been more appropriate for a man than Fate, Texas. Ralph's life was all about fate, great faith, and God.

As fate would have it, Ralph left Fate and moved to Rockwall when he was 3 years old. He started working there at a local convenience store.

As fate would have it, guess who showed up? Bonnie and Clyde, the notorious killers on a rampage throughout Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, that part of our country. They gave Ralph a 25-cent tip—a quarter—big money in those days. He was so excited, he showed his boss the quarter and noticed a newspaper lying there on the

floor. Whose picture was on the front of that paper? Bonnie and Clyde.

He told his boss, "They just came here. They are in Rockwall. That is their car." His boss called the local sheriff. Ralph couldn't hear the conversation, but the sheriff said something to the effect of, "Thanks for calling about Bonnie and Clyde. I've got two stray dogs I've got to catch. Once I get those dogs, I'm going after Bonnie and Clyde."

After the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Ralph joined our Navy to fly naval aircraft. He went to Pensacola, Florida, for his first training.

As fate would have it, he met a Hall of Fame baseball player, Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox, the last man to hit over .400 in a season. Knowing he had Ted on his baseball team, Ralph found a young Army sergeant and said: "Hey, son, I want to bet you my whole paycheck on a baseball game, Navy versus Army."

The day of the game, Ralph knocked on Ted's door. Ted answered with a fishing pole and some gear to go fishing. Ralph said, "You have to play baseball and beat Army." Ted said, "I came here to learn to fly, defend America, and then fish." Ralph held the game up so Ted could go AWOL, absent without leave, and go fishing.

Of course, that night, Ralph had to go home to his queen, his beloved Mary Ellen, and tell her, "Honey, I have just lost my entire paycheck betting on a baseball game with the Army."

Ralph got out of flight school and went to war. He flew the F6F Hellcat on aircraft carriers. Now, I was a naval aviator, and I have to tell you, those guys were crazy, crazy, crazy courageous. Right now, if you land on an aircraft carrier, you have what is called the meatball. This ball gives you course and glide slope. In those days, they had guys with paddles.

Ralph said his proudest achievement in naval aviation during the war was to make sure on his record book that his takeoffs were the same number as his landings.

As fate would have it, once again, Ralph came home to Rockwall, Texas, to become a lawyer. The local county judge retired, so there was a vacancy. People said, "Ralph, you should run our county. File for election." Ralph didn't want to play politics. That wasn't his business. But driving home, he said, "You know what? I will just apply, maybe be there for just a couple months and go back home to my lawyer job." He filed 1 minute before the deadline that year, 1 minute.

He was driving home. The local radio was booming: "Ralph Hall, running for county judge." Guess who was outside his home, waiting with an angered look on her face? His queen, Mary Ellen.

That fate got Ralph going into public service and got Ralph here on Capitol Hill.

As fate would have it, when America goes back to the Moon sometime in the next couple years, they are going to do that because of Ralph Hall.

God bless Ralph Hall. As our dear friend Gene Cernan said: May you always have fair winds and following seas. You shot for your Moon. You are still among the stars.

God bless Ralph Hall.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, as a third-generation farmer from California's San Joaquin Valley, I wish everyone a happy National Agriculture Day, something that we do throughout our country.

I am proud, obviously, to represent the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley. But our agricultural productivity throughout the country, beginning with the very origins of the history of the United States, has truly been one of the tremendous assets that we have had.

We are home to the most productive agricultural land in the world, not only throughout the country, but in California. Our farmers, our dairymen and -women, our ranchers, and our livestock folks feed the country. I have often said that our food security, that dinner that we have on our dinner table every night, is a part of America's national food security.

As a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, I am proud that we delivered a comprehensive farm bill last year. Now it is part of our job to ensure that we implement that farm bill as a safety net for agriculture throughout the country. But it is also a safety net for those who are working poor, those who are, unfortunately, recipients of food assistance programs and the school lunch and the school breakfast programs. So the farm bill does a great deal to help all Americans.

This year, the Agriculture Committee will work to ensure that those promises we made in the farm bill will be implemented in the way we intended. The subcommittee that I chair, the Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture, will be at the vanguard of that effort.

Today, on National Agriculture Day, let us thank those who grow America's food and fiber and put it on America's dinner table every night. I am talking about the farmers, the dairymen and -women, and the farmworkers, who, through their hard work and the fruits of their labor, make this all come together.

VISAS FOR CITIZENS OF PORTUGAL

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, soon, the Portuguese Caucus will be reintroducing legislation that is important for not only the United States, but for our ally Portugal. We will be introducing bipartisan legislation that will allow citizens of Portugal to be eligible for what is called the E-1 treaty trader visa and the E-2 treaty investors visa.

Portugal is one of the United States' oldest allies and a close economic part-

ner. The United States became Portugal's largest trading partner outside the European Union in 2015. Bilateral trade reached \$4.2 billion in 2015, a 30 percent increase from 5 years ago.

However, because Portugal did not have a bilateral investor treaty with the United States before joining the European Union, they are one of only five European Union countries whose citizens are not eligible for the E-1 and E-2 visas.

This is long overdue. It is good for the United States; it is good for Portugal; and it is good for increased economic activity between both countries. It is bipartisan. Hopefully, this year, we will be successful in implementing these E-1 and E-2 treaty investor visas.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

We helped create NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, not only to protect our European allies, but to protect our interests. For 70 years, it has done just that, a remarkable success.

Next month, in April, we have invited the Secretary General of NATO to come address a bipartisan joint session of Congress to take assessment of and to commend our NATO partners, along with the United States, for a job well done.

How do you say a job well done? Well, after World War II, over the last 70 years, this is the longest peacetime period in Europe in 1,000 years. Think about that. The last 70 years has been the longest peacetime period in Europe in more than 1,000 years.

NATO has been one of the cornerstones that has created that peace dividend, being an absolute and critical barrier against the aggression of the Soviet Union and other totalitarian states, being there for the fall of the Iron Curtain. NATO's relevance today is just as important as it was then.

RECOGNIZING MCCAFFREY'S FOOD MARKETS

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, our local businesses in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, help make our community vibrant and prosperous. Today, I am proud to recognize one such business, McCaffrey's Food Markets, which was recently named Business of the Year by the Newtown Business Association. Each year, the Newtown Business Association recognizes a business that contributes to our regional economy and contributes substantially to the community at large.

The McCaffreys opened their first supermarket in 1986 in Lower Makefield and over the past three decades has expanded throughout Pennsylvania and