

finally considers the Butch Lewis Act. This bill moves America one step closer to restoring its broken pension promises to 1,300,000 pensioners across our Nation.

Today I met with another 50 retirees from trucking firms, candy manufacturers, miners, and others in Ohio whose futures are at risk in their golden years. Their top concern is economic security.

I heard the stresses they have endured since receiving letters threatening pension cuts of up to 70 percent of their earned pensions. Worry between family members, increased suicides amongst pensioner friends, anxiety and growing health concerns. This isn't the retirement hardworking Americans earned.

Valorie Shapler, a retired Roadway Express truck driver, is suffering from brain cancer. She is fighting for her life daily, and why should she have to worry about the pension cuts that she earned?

Vicki Bailey, a widow of a trucker, raised their family but already struggles to survive on her spousal benefits that were cut in half with her husband's passing, and she has her own health issues to worry about.

Jim Baumgartner asked for a prayer.

How can Congress ignore the pleas of millions of hardworking Americans?

Pensions have afforded millions of retired middle-class people some economic security in their retirement years. Please let our colleagues join us in broad bipartisan passage of the Butch Lewis Act tomorrow.

#### HONORING DR. DAKEYAN CHA DRE GRAHAM AS FLORIDA'S 2020 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

(Mr. SPANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SPANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Dakeyan Graham for being selected as Florida's Teacher of the Year. He was chosen out of more than 176,000 teachers to receive Florida's highest award for public educators.

Known affectionately by his students as Dr. Dre, he has long been driven by music. He played the saxophone in the marching band at King High School; and he went on to study music education, earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and a doctorate from the University of South Florida.

He returned to King High School as an educator where he teaches his students music in the same room where he learned to play.

He has worked at the school for more than a decade and now serves as the director of bands and instrumental studies. As part of this award, Dr. Graham will spend 1 year as an education ambassador where he will work to raise public awareness of other exceptional teachers, provide learning opportunities to educators, and recruit future teachers.

Dr. Graham has dedicated his career to serving his students, and this award shows he sets an example not only to his students but to us all.

#### COMMEMORATING PASTOR R. L. ROGERS

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Pastor R. L. Rogers, a good friend, a man of God, a community leader, father, and husband. Pastor Rogers transitioned from labor to eternal reward this past weekend.

Pastor Rogers attended high school in south Texas before graduating from the Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. Pastor Roger's time in seminary started his journey in faith and helping our community that expanded over five decades.

Pastor Rogers was the founder and the only pastor for 53 years of the Harvey Avenue Baptist Church, a place of worship that is a cornerstone in the Fort Worth community. That was only the beginning of his accomplishments.

Pastor Rogers was also an avid volunteer for important causes like mentoring the youth in our community and serving as a chaplain at the Tarrant County Jail. He was also a nationally known evangelist, a pastor, and Gospel preacher.

Pastor Rogers was a pillar in the community spending his 53 years teaching and encouraging the word of God. It was an honor to know Pastor Rogers and just to know the legacy that he has left behind in our community.

My heartfelt condolences to his family. We thank you for sharing Pastor Rogers with us in the Fort Worth community for so long.

#### RECOGNIZING ED LOMASNEY OF THE BURTCHVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

(Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ed Lomasney for his 60 years of dedicated service to the Burtchville, Michigan, fire department.

Mr. Lomasney became a firefighter following in the footsteps of his father, who helped found the Burtchville Fire Department. Over the last 60 years, Ed has served as a volunteer firefighter and has been instrumental in growing the firehouse through his time, resources, and mentorship.

In addition to volunteering with the fire department, Ed worked and retired from DTE Energy. He is a devoted husband to his wife, Mary Nell, and loving father to their three children.

For six decades, Ed has been a mainstay of the department, and he will be

missed by all. Although Ed may be retiring from the fire department, we all know he will remain involved in the community to make an impact on all of Burtchville.

Madam Speaker, I join the Burtchville community in thanking him for his dedication and his 60 years of service and wish him the best in his retirement.

#### MISS NEW JERSEY 2019

(Mr. VAN DREW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, 28 young, impressive women shared their talents in the Miss New Jersey competition. The competition has been around for almost 100 years and since that time has evolved into a fantastic celebration of some of the best young individuals in south Jersey.

The Miss New Jersey competition was the first to offer a talent category, and this past year the competition focused even more on aptitude and intellect over outward appearance. This year the candidates were able to emphasize their individual styles and their individual passions, and all of the young women spoke about different social impact initiatives that mattered greatly to them.

One of my wonderful spring interns, Alyssa Rodriguez, placed in the top 11 with her platform of social media awareness. She made south Jersey so very proud. Miss Jade Glab of Belmar, New Jersey, was crowned Miss New Jersey with her platform of healthy children, strong America.

We are proud of all the contestants and the intellect and the compassion they bring to all of their communities, and I am most proud of our contestants from south Jersey.

□ 1945

#### WAYCROSS AREA COMMUNITY THEATER

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Waycross Area Community Theater for all of its work to support local theater while preserving historical structures in the First Congressional District of Georgia. Using local talent to provide live family friendly musicals, this community theater is truly a gem.

Since 1913, theater has played a large role in the social scene of Waycross, with the Ritz Theater hosting operas there. Noted as one of Georgia's "finest theater" structures, the Ritz Theater transitioned over time into showing only movies and then, finally, going dormant.

Now, the Waycross Area Community Theater maintains the historic art

deco-style theater with its live productions, and their work has not gone unnoticed. Aside from the crowded audiences, the Fox Theater has awarded grants to the Community Theater over the last 2 years to help preserve the historic Ritz Theater.

Thank you to all who perform shows, attend musicals, and preserve the wonderful theater culture in Waycross, Georgia.

#### FEDERAL TRIO PROGRAMS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3800, the Educational Opportunities and Success Act, the bill introduced last week by my colleague Representative WARREN DAVIDSON of Ohio.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3800 seeks to address a common, yet preventable, issue impacting students from low-income families and first-generation college students. In recent years, applicants to the Department of Education's Upward Bound program found themselves stuck in financial limbo when their grant applications were rejected due to clerical errors, some errors as insignificant as using the wrong font.

This is unacceptable. I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 3800, a bill that reauthorizes the TRIO programs for 5 additional years.

I am also proud to work with my colleagues across the aisle to support this commonsense legislation that eases the administrative burdens during the application process.

TRIO programs like Upward Bound are critical in ensuring disadvantaged students have a shot at turning the dream of a college education into a reality, and H.R. 3800 has my full support.

#### CONSENSUS RULE SUBVERTED

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, it has now been 6 legislative days since H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act, was denied a standalone vote.

Democrat leadership subverted their own rules and prevented a vote on this bipartisan legislation, which now has 371 cosponsors, over 86 percent of the Members of the Congress.

Under new rules in this Congress, H.R. 553 qualified for the Consensus Calendar, a provision for bills to receive a standalone vote. An article published in *The Hill* stated today: "The new rule keeps top House leaders from squelching any bill that has at least 290 cosponsors, or two-thirds of the House membership."

Sadly, the Democrats did just that. They targeted and removed H.R. 553 from the Consensus Calendar.

Democrat leadership should bring this bill to the floor. The time is now to give these rightly deserved benefits to the surviving spouses of service-members and finally end the widow's tax.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO GARY JOHN ALEKNAVICH ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. SOTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, tonight, I would like to honor Gary John Aleknavich and congratulate him on his upcoming retirement.

Gary John Aleknavich is a U.S. Navy veteran, labor leader, maintenance foreman, journeyman mechanic, and certified welder by trade. He has received a certificate of achievement for completing courses at the Florida International University Center for Labor Research and Studies.

After serving in the U.S. Navy from 1976 to 1979, Gary was hired by Florida Power and Light, and then went on to become an apprenticeship mechanic at the Florida Port Everglades Power Plant. In 1984, he became a journeyman mechanic at the St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant, and later became a mechanical certified welder and a nuclear maintenance foreman.

He has held various positions within his local union of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, including treasurer, executive board member, job steward, System Council U-4 delegate, and national convention committee delegate, and served as the Florida Electrical Worker Association's vice president and executive board member.

Gary has been a member of IBEW since 1980 and even started the process to establish and train IBEW officers and members in the IBEW Code of Excellence training program. He soon became System Council U-4, assistant business manager of IBEW System Council U-4, and was later elected to serve as business manager in 2005, where he ran unopposed for four additional 3-year terms and will retire next month.

There is no question that Gary John Aleknavich has been a leader in his community and a public servant, and one of labor's strongest members.

Madam Speaker, for that, we thank him.

#### 34TH ANNUAL PARK AND RECREATION MONTH

(Mr. WESTERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate our Nation's parks.

This July marks the 34th annual Park and Recreation Month, a celebration highlighting the incredible opportunities and benefits that park and recreation agencies provide to their communities.

I, like many Arkansans, grew up enjoying everything that the Natural State has to offer. From hiking and hunting in its forests, to swimming, fishing, and boating on its crystal-clear lakes and rivers, outdoor recreation is an essential part of life for the families of my State. Some of my favorite memories of life were made outside in the beautiful outdoors of Arkansas, and I am blessed to still be making similar memories today.

Our park and recreation agencies are an important part of our history and offer much to the quality of our future. Theodore Roosevelt once said: "It is an incalculable added pleasure to anyone's sum of happiness if he or she grows to know, even slightly and imperfectly, how to read and enjoy the wonder-book of nature."

As a forester and lifelong lover of nature, the wonder-book of nature has always been fascinating to me, and I hope to motivate people to get out and enjoy the natural beauty around them.

In the words of the fictional sitcom character Leslie Knope, "America is awesome." I encourage everyone to go outside with friends and family to enjoy all the awesomeness our parks have to offer.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALLEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ON BEING NAMED THE DISTRICT OF DISTINCTION

(Mr. TAYLOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Allen Independent School District for being named a District of Distinction by District Administration Magazine.

Allen ISD serves thousands of students grades K through 12 in a rapidly growing community. In an effort to meet growing needs of the community, Allen ISD launched a STEAM Center to provide a unique learning environment to help foster an interest in STEAM amongst students. The brand-new facility offers students hands-on learning experiences ranging from indoor robotics labs to outdoor discovery gardens.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me today in congratulating Allen ISD, their staff, parents, and students for being named District of Distinction and commend them on their dedication to cultivating a passion in students for learning more about science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.