

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the important accomplishments of my distinguished constituent, Ted Rowse, and hope this chamber will join me in wishing him a very happy 100th birthday.

COMMEMORATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 70th anniversary of the National Science Foundation (NSF).

As the world responds to the novel coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever to invest in science and the next generation of scientists who will lead us through future global challenges.

My state is proud to be home to one of the eight NSF-funded Mathematical Sciences Institutes—the Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics (ICERM).

In early 2019, scientists gathered at the Institute to study mathematical models related to treatment and prevention of infectious disease, research that has become glaringly necessary in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Investments like this are vital to prepare us for future challenges to Americans' health and welfare and are why I continue to champion America's research enterprise.

I hope you will join with me in celebrating the many accomplishments of NSF over the last 70 years, as well as the crucial work it continues to do.

RECOGNIZING GERRI BACKES OF KALISPELL

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Gerri Backes of Kalispell for supporting and caring for seniors in her community as we face this unprecedented time.

Gerri is the president of the Kalispell Senior Center. Since taking over last summer, she has made increasing social events a priority, with a goal of creating programs that seniors will look forward to. Gerri says this new approach has paid dividends and now their group is closer than ever. Last year, she set up a "90-plus" party for 17 members of the senior center, and dozens showed up to celebrate their long, fulfilling lives. She says parties like these promote community and build critical relationships that ultimately improve the life of her members.

She also oversees the center's "Warm It Up" program. Through this major project, seniors knit hats, scarfs, and quilts to donate to organizations and schools throughout Kalispell. In 2019 alone, they donated 3,000 items. Under her leadership, the center also offers exercise classes along with educational presentations on health care and fraud. They play Pinochle on Tuesdays and Fridays and

have a very popular weekly Bingo night. But all of that has come to a screeching halt.

Officials closed the center in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, seniors are confined to their homes, isolated and with little to no social interaction. Luckily for this Kalispell group, they have Gerri.

For Gerri, one of the best things in life is laughter. She says it keeps the soul happy and hopeful. While the center's doors are closed, Gerri has been making phone calls to check up on her friends, and she refuses to hang up until she gets a laugh. And that's not all she does.

During these long days at home, it's easy to get lonely and restless, so Gerri delivers puzzles and books to her friends. She says this group of Kalispell Valley seniors is her family, and she'll continue to help them whether the center is open or closed.

Madam Speaker, for delivering laughs and hope to Montana seniors, I recognize Gerri Backes of Kalispell for her spirit of Montana.

REMEMBERING JAMES WAYNE SMITH

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of James Wayne Smith of Jesup, Georgia, who passed away at 92 years old on April 22nd.

Known to some as "Hatchet," and others as "The Mayor of Doctortown," which had no mayor, he had a talent for making friends and was loved by many.

Wayne was a faithful member of Epworth United Methodist Church, and quite literally played a role in its foundation, as he graded the lot where the church now stands.

Although his dedicated work in highway construction for over 60 years sometimes took him away from home, he always returned to his beloved Jesup.

In his free time, he loved to fish and hike on the Altamaha River, but most of all, he loved spending time with his family and friends.

A renowned raconteur and spinner of yarns, Wayne's good humor never failed to bring a smile.

I am thankful for the immense impact he had on his community, and I know his legacy will remain.

My thoughts and prayers are with all who knew and loved Wayne during this most difficult time.

HONORING DEBORAH WRIGHT

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and ambitious woman, Deborah Wright, who has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication and a desire to serve others.

Deborah was born to the late Mr. Lee Grant Bridges and Mrs. Lutishia Bridges on November 6, 1961 in Rosedale, MS. She attended

Marshall Elementary, Brinkley Jr. High and Hinds A.H.S. then crossed over to Hinds Jr. College in Utica, MS.

Deborah Wright married in 1981 and two loving children, Laquita Shonta Sampson and Lawrence Douglas Sampson Jr., were born.

In 1995, Mrs. Wright received her Real Estate Degree from the Mississippi Realtors Institute in Jackson MS. With an unwavering passion to improve her community, create balanced mental health care regimes, and to encourage others to excel past adversity, Deborah became the epitome of women in business leadership. She has established herself as a trailblazer in the business industry for over 30 years with entrepreneurial experience in the state of Mississippi. After college in 1981 Deborah Wright was employed by Milwaukee Electric Tools as a repair person. In 1992, she incorporated her first business, Teen's World Activity and Community Center, which is a non-profit organization. In 1992, Deborah worked as the Public Relations Officer for Operation Shoestring, Inc. and later Deborah partnered with her mother, Lutishia Bridges and opened "Linda's Florist and Gift Shop" in Jackson in 1996 and she also worked in transportation for Jackson Public School District.

Mrs. Wright rose against adversity by becoming the first African American woman in the world and sole proprietor of Mississippi Truck Driving Training, Inc., located in Jackson, Mississippi. After closing the truck driving school Deborah started Sincere Trucking. She wittingly coined its name from her late grandson, Master Sincere Rachele Christian.

This Bolivar County native has always exhibited visionary strength, while achieving a ripple effect of empowerment for future endeavors within the Health Care Industries. She later started Sincere Home Care, LLC in June 2013, certified and licensed with MS Department of Mental Health and MS Health Department to provide a complement of services to the community. She patterned her mission statement after her non-profit organization: Helping Other People Excel (H. O. P. E.). She developed her companies to offer a solution for the need of a permanent mediator between mental health and health care.

Deborah is not a stranger to blazing paths; she is motivated by the belief to insure a healthy standard of care for every client. She has vowed to ensure that Sincere Home Care LLC would become a pillar of major change for the impoverished and unhealthy in every county in Mississippi. Her goal is to provide first-rate employment opportunities as well as outstanding health care services for all social classes. Some of her services include: Assisted Living; Supervised Living; Sincere Home Care, LLC: a Mental Health Headquarter which includes: Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse and Recovery, Supported Living, Community Respite, Peer Support, Disabled & Developmental Disabled Community Support, Home Nursing Respite, Private Duty Nursing and Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy; three Adult Day Service Centers: in Jackson, Louisville and Morton, MS.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Deborah Wright for her passion and dedication to serving many people and having the desire to make a difference in the communities.

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the fallen officers from the state of Florida who diligently gave their lives to protect their communities. This week marks the annual observance of National Police Week. Though we set aside one week a year to honor law enforcement across the country, I encourage all Americans to join me in recognizing the dedication, courage, and selfless sacrifice of our nation's officers every day.

The men and women being honored this week gave the last full measure of devotion to their country in the form of the ultimate offering—their lives. Every community is indebted to those individuals in uniform who voluntarily put themselves in danger for our safety and security.

Over three hundred officers' names from across the nation will be added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., this year for sacrificing their lives in the line of duty. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the 13 officers from Florida who bravely and selflessly served to protect the state. It is an honor to recognize them along with all men and women in law enforcement.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY IN
THE OSCE REGION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to emphasize the urgency of global press freedom, particularly across the 57-nation region of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Earlier last week, we celebrated World Press Freedom Day, a day originally proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1993 to celebrate the fundamental principle of a free and independent press. On this day and beyond, we honor journalists and media professionals for their tireless service in reporting the truth, sometimes at the risk of their own personal safety. World Press Freedom Day serves as an important reminder to governments around the world to respect their country's commitment to press freedom.

The U.S. Helsinki Commission, of which I am Chairman, is charged with monitoring compliance with human rights and security commitments in the OSCE region. Freedom of the press is a foundational commitment to human rights and democracy. Unfortunately, however, some leaders view the media as a threat and seek to silence individuals and outlets through financial, legal, and physical means. What these leaders truly fear is that journalists will expose corruption, human rights violations, abuses of power, and other undemocratic behavior.

According to the latest reports from the Committee to Protect Journalists, 250 journalists are imprisoned worldwide for their work, 64 journalists are missing, and 1,369 journalists have been killed since 1992. Additionally, Reporters Without Borders' 2020 World Press Freedom Index found that global press freedom has deteriorated by 12 percent since 2013.

Madam Speaker, I also rise to applaud the undaunted service of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Dé sir. His leadership as an independent monitor for these issues among OSCE participating States has offered candid review of our collective challenges, while demonstrating the importance of OSCE institutions. Mr. Dé sir's team has provided impeccable service to help nations implement their international commitments to this end through country visits and legislative review, as well as hosting expert conferences. I encourage my colleagues to closely follow his work and to learn more about his mandate by reviewing the proceedings of the U.S. Helsinki Commission hearing I chaired with Mr. Dé sir on July 25, 2019, addressing "State of Media Freedom in the OSCE Region."

Madam Speaker, amid this global pandemic, it is more important than ever that journalists and media professionals are able to work freely and without retribution. Unfortunately, too many journalists remain in jail throughout the OSCE region, while states like Russia, Azerbaijan, and Hungary criminalize providing essential information and transparency about the COVID-19 pandemic. Independent media continues to be assaulted under the pretense of punishing allegedly false, misleading, or unofficial information. This is unacceptable.

Earlier in April, I released statements expressing concern with the latest attacks on press freedom in Russia and the unchecked power granted to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán amid the coronavirus pandemic.

During these trying times, strong journalism and access to accurate, unbiased information are essential tools for countering the spread of the disease. I ask my colleagues to join me in urging states to recognize the indispensable role of the media during this time and to reverse policies that in any way discourage freedom of expression.