

forward in light of an increasingly complex global security environment. Garrett has distinguished himself as an attorney who worked tirelessly to provide proactive, accurate, and innovative legal advice on legally complex, sensitive issues impacting operations, procurement, fiscal matters, labor, ethics issues, environmental concerns, and intelligence law. Furthermore, he has demonstrated an unmatched record of leadership while overseeing the provision of legal advice by more than 800 civilian and military attorneys within OGC, ensuring the successful execution of Navy and Marine Corps missions worldwide.

Throughout his career, Garrett has received various awards for his outstanding contributions to the Navy, the Department of Defense (DoD), and our nation. These include the Department of the Navy Meritorious and Superior Civilian Service Awards, the Presidential Rank Award of Meritorious Executive, and other performance-related accolades.

Madam Speaker, I offer Garrett my congratulations on retiring from federal service after a career of great contribution to our Nation's defense and to the well-being of all those who have served in the Navy. I hope all of my colleagues will join me in recognizing Garrett L. Rensing as he reaches this milestone and in wishing him all the best in the future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF  
COMMANDER MERLE SMITH

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 2021*

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today in honor of the life of the late Commander Merle James Smith Jr., the first Black graduate of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Academy in New London, CT, and the first Black officer to command a warship in close quarters combat. Commander Smith passed away June 16, 2021, at the age of 76. It was an honor to know Commander Merle Smith and bare witness to all the incredible milestones he achieved in his life. He was a true patriot who always placed others before himself.

Born in Greenville, South Carolina to retired Army Colonel Merle James Smith Sr. and Jacqueline T. Smith, Merle grew up in many cities across the United States as well as Germany and Japan. He graduated from Aberdeen High School in Maryland before choosing to attend the Coast Guard Academy in 1962 to play football under the coaching of Otto Graham, the former professional Cleveland Browns quarterback player.

Graduating with a degree in marine engineering in 1966, Officer Smith's first assignment was to serve aboard the *Minnetonka* as a communication officer. He went on to command the Coast Guard Cutter, *Cape Walsh*, for two years before joining forces in Vietnam where he commanded the USCG Cutters *Point Mast* and *Point Ellie*, and made history serving as the first Black commanding officer in close quarters combat. He commanded these ships through more than eighty fire support missions during the successful Operation Market Time, which halted the movement of supplies into South Vietnam. For his heroic

service, Commander Smith earned a Bronze star, a Navy Meritorious Unit Citation, Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and Vietnam Campaign Medal, among several other accolades.

After returning from the war, Commander Smith was stationed at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. There, he attended George Washington University's School of Law where he met his wife of 47 years, Lynda. Upon graduating with a Juris Doctor, Commander Smith moved back to Connecticut to resume his activities at the Academy, this time as a professor in Jaw. As expected, Commander Smith excelled in his role as a professor and gained notoriety for his ability to keep his students engaged. Commander Smith went on to teach for 13 years and after enriching the minds of thousands of cadets—Commander Smith retired from this role and his active duty service in 1979. Commander Smith's service to our nation however continued at the Coast Guard Reserves for nine years as Commander of the Coast Guard Reserve. Commander Smith simultaneously was recruited by our nation's largest submarine manufacturer, General Dynamic Electric Boat, to join their legal team. Commander Smith worked at Electric Boat for 16 years and made his way up to Chief Council before officially retiring in 1995. From beginning to end, awe inspiring is the only way to really describe what was Commander Smith's career and life. To memorialize all he did for our nation—the Coast Guard Academy announced it will rename its Military Officers Club in honor of him and here in D.C.—our very own National Museum of African American History and Culture proclaimed that they will set up a special exhibit in honor of Commander Smith and his life.

Madam Speaker, it is an honor to represent constituents who are as humble, dutiful, and distinguished as Commander Smith. While we mourn his passing, we can take pride in his legacy which will continue to echo through the United States Coast Guard community as an example to our future military leaders. Please keep Commander Smith's family—his loving wife Lynda, children Merle J. Smith III, Chelsea, and Danielle—in your thoughts as they now carry his memory forward. I ask that the entire House join me in recognizing his life and service to our nation.

MORE FUNDING FOR POLICING

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO  
SABLAN**

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 2021*

Mr. SABLAN. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce legislation that gives this House an opportunity to provide more funding for policing.

My bill does this by allowing the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa to be treated as two separate entities for the purposes of the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program. Currently, the Marianas and American Samoa are lumped together for funding, unlike the other U.S. insular areas—Puerto Rico, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands—which are treated as individual jurisdictions, as are all fifty States.

By fixing this inequity in funding for police in the Northern Marianas and American Samoa, we can help our men and women in blue receive the necessary training and equipment they need to keep our communities safe. Making this change will also provide more funding to support prosecutors and the courts, as well as justice-related initiatives aimed at crime prevention.

Local law enforcement is increasingly the first line of defense against the evolving security threats our country faces. We must do all we can to recognize the vital role of our police in maintaining public safety.

The gentlelady from American Samoa, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, and the gentleman from Hawaii, Mr. KAHELE, are original cosponsors of the bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

THE AMERICAN IDEAL

**HON. VIRGINIA FOXX**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 20, 2021*

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, recently, I received an impassioned letter from Elizabeth Bradley of Bessemer City, North Carolina, about the American ideal.

In her letter she writes, "The American ideal is the revolutionary thought that it is not by government, nor wealth, nor any human intervention that people have rights, but by the divine power of God."

Ms. Bradley is exactly right, Madam Speaker.

The American ideal has withstood the test of time because of those who put their faith in God's plan rather than their own.

Madam Speaker, let us never forget that we are one nation under God, and the freedoms we proudly espouse are a gift that He has bestowed upon us.

THE AMERICAN IDEAL

My name is Elizabeth Bradley, and I am 18 years old. Recently the President challenged anyone to define America, claiming that it could not be done. I felt lead to write this short essay, not only defining what is truly American and outlining the most basic steps towards restoring us to our former glory. I encourage the reader to share the ideas presented in this essay at any and every opportunity, and I thank the reader in advance for taking the time to read them.

It comes upon my conscience this day, July 2, 2021, to make note of the American Ideal, which is the very thing that has been the cornerstone of my upbringing and second only in my very identity to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am inclined to write this not only for myself but for the multitude like me who are filled with anguish at the state of the nation in which we live. I struggled in my younger years with the idea that my country is so divided against itself. I have many times over feared the self-division or conquering of the U.S. by a foreign power. But it occurs to me now that America is not and never, in concept or reality, has been a particular plot of land. The United States as we call it is only the land in which the American Ideal has been allowed to flourish. And while it will be a dismal day when the current government and land are inevitably overrun, America is not a thing that can truly be destroyed. America is an idea, a rather great one, in which people are

by Providence allowed to protect and fight for their God given rights.

The American ideal is the revolutionary thought that it is not by government, nor wealth, nor any human intervention that people have rights, but by the divine power of God. And it is for this very reason that we have been uniquely and divinely blessed thus far in our pursuits as a nation. It is my firm belief that it was no man, but God Himself who turned the tide of the American revolution. Through a myriad of miracles, lives improbably saved, and weather, God lead an army of untrained and largely uneducated patriots to the most unlikely victory in all of human history. God's plan for America was vested in the very foundation of its ideals and laws. The American ideal acknowledges the fact that "All men are created equal" and that "They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights". The American ideal puts the liberty and responsibility of preserving life, enjoying liberty, and the pursuit of happiness on the people of a nation. In turn the government respects those rights and protects them. It is made clear in the American Ideal that these certain rights; among them being free speech, freedom of religion, freedom to keep and bear arms, privacy from government intervention and the right to a fair trial and fair treatment throughout any judicial proceedings, among others; are not capable of being given or taken away at the hands of any man but given by God alone in His mercies and through the provision of death of Jesus Christ.

The American Ideal is one, and governmentally the only one, that is constructed in a way that can glorify God. It is for this reason that God has supported this great American experiment. It is my unfavorable duty at this point to note that the governmental body of these United States has long strayed from this ideal and its purpose. Through centuries of corruption and societal changes, some of which were necessary and some of which were orchestrated by the enemy to divide our people, American society has forgotten its foundation in Providence. The government, which is now lead by a people who are led by partisan politics, is a shell of what it used to and rightly should be. The leaders of this nation have taken to voting only for what they believe will get them re-elected. Worse than that, some leaders in this nation have decided to vote in accordance with whatever will oppose God's Truth and the Providential American Ideal. The enemy has not only taken hold in the government but in all aspects of the American life. Business, entertainment, and even many churches have fallen short of God's plan for this nation. Wealthy and vicious people now monopolize almost all forms of communication and consumers allow themselves to be silenced. Churches no longer speak Gods Truth, but pander to a modern audience that insists upon the acceptance and glorification of sin. The doctrines of free speech and religion have been distorted and abused in a way that benefits those who are against the common people. The poor are intentionally kept down for the political gain of those who oppress them most. And the enemy, with his many minions in this world are attempting to erase God's name from the societal conscience of Americans.

The hope that we may all hold to is in this verse "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14. We the people, who believe in the American Ideal by nature are God's people. We must take heed, not only of the hope held in this verse but also of the ef-

fort that we must put in to achieve this goal. We must humble ourselves. We must not be blinded by our pride, in ourselves, our party affiliation, or in our own ideas. Conversely, we must humble ourselves and ask only what God would have us do, think, say, or vote. We must seek God's plan for us and our nation through prayer, and we must be vigilant in this effort. We must pray for forgiveness for our collective sins, and we must turn from those things which we hold dear that we know are not morally right. We must turn both from personal sin and do all we can to hinder our national sins. If we are to hold onto the nation that we love, and properly protect the American Ideal we must, as a people, place our faith in the sole Almighty God of Israel and America.

While it appalls and amazes me that there are those that do not hold this nation and this Ideal the way I do, I often feel that there are a precious few that see the American Ideal the way I do. In recent times many of those who claim the title of patriot are unwilling to give up even the smallest convenience to divest power from those who seek to oppress us. Our forefathers, and in fact many influential women of the American Revolution began their revolution by giving up their dearest luxuries. It may not seem so dear a cost to us now to give up the drinking of tea, but what if Amazon Prime was put in that place? How many are truly willing to give up something, never mind everything to make the American Ideal once again thrive? And, while there is much explosive drivel strewn across the internet about patriotism, I challenge the reader to find a single person who is both unwilling to stop buying from Google and willing to give their very life for the cause.

Nevertheless, this is written not to discourage the truly American people but to bring them hope. The essence of America is within the hearts and minds of those who know and believe the American Ideal. The belief in God given freedoms, personal liberty and the responsibilities therein, and the truth that any man can become successful when the proper work is put in; that is the American Ideal. And this Ideal can not be lost, it can not be altered, and it can not be destroyed. No matter how hard the enemy tries, he can not destroy what God has created and blessed. The battle is won against the Washington oligarchy, against the immoral CEOs, against those who seek to silence us, against the bitter hatred among brothers, against the sex culture, against drug culture, against Satan himself. It is done. Therefore, I urge the reader to get on your knees tonight and pray over this nation. Pray with confidence in the One you are speaking to. Pray for the leaders of our churches, schools, and government. Pray over what roll God has for you in the next chapter of this American experiment, put on the armor of Christ and stand prepared for the coming battle.—Elizabeth S. Bradley

PRESERVING HOME AND OFFICE  
NUMBERS IN EMERGENCIES ACT  
OF 2021

SPEECH OF

**HON. ANNA G. ESHOO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 19, 2021

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 678, the PHONE Act, a simple but powerful bill to ensure that Americans who lose their homes in natural disasters do not also lose their home phone numbers.

Last year, the CZU Lightning Complex Fire burned 86,509 acres in my Congressional District, making it the 12th most destructive fire in California history. Seventy-seven thousand of my constituents were evacuated, and the fire destroyed nearly 1,500 homes, businesses, and other buildings.

This figure includes nearly 1,000 families in my district who couldn't return home because their home was destroyed. The PHONE Act helps these families and thousands of other American families who lose their homes in wildfires and other disasters.

The PHONE Act has three parts. First, if the President issues a major disaster declaration and a governor designates a disaster area, phone numbers in that designated area cannot be reassigned for one year. Second, if someone in the disaster area needs more than a year, they can get a one-year extension because rebuilding can take years. Third, the bill allows consumers to cancel phone service without a cancellation fee if their home is inaccessible or uninhabitable. The bill also prohibits resubscription fees if consumers get phone service somewhere else in the area.

Some may ask why we need all of this for a simple phone number. One of the first things parents teach their children is their phone number. Many of us still remember our parents' home phone numbers. While many are opting to live with just cellphones, it's important to consider who depends on landlines: older Americans and retirees who often have multiple doctors, caregivers, and loved ones using long-held phone numbers.

Congressman MIKE THOMPSON authored the bill to help the survivors of the Atlas and Tubbs fires that ravished his Congressional District in 2017. Thousands lost their homes and were further frustrated to learn they also lost their phone number, because phone companies had given the numbers away.

The bill is carefully drafted to plug a small gap in the law, but this gap means the world to our constituents for whom this bill is written to protect.

Last Congress, the bill was marked up on March 10, 2020, by the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and on September 9, 2020, by the full Energy & Commerce Committee. At both markups, I offered amendments to ensure the bill would have broad, bipartisan support and would be as effective as possible. On September 29, 2020, the House passed the bill by voice vote. Sadly, the Senate did not consider the measure.

I urge my House colleagues to pass this bill once again and urge the Senate to take it up and pass the bill as well.

RECOGNIZING STEPHEN KLEIN  
FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS OF SERVICE  
TO THE STATE OF VERMONT

**HON. PETER WELCH**

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor my friend Stephen Klein, who is retiring from his job as Chief Fiscal Officer to the Vermont State Legislature. Stephen joined the staff of the Vermont Legislature in 1992 as a Fiscal Analyst and, in