

honor, courage, and sacrifice of Boatswain's Mate Second Class George Hekowczyk. I wish him the happiest of birthdays and thank him for his dedication and Service to this Nation.

HONORING JESSICA SHAPIRO FOR EXEMPLARY WORK FOR THE HOUSE OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise along with the Honorable FRANK PALLONE of New Jersey, to include in the RECORD a letter to recognize and express our sincere appreciation for Ms. Jessica Shapiro's nearly two decades of exemplary work for the House Office of the Legislative Counsel.

FEBRUARY 7, 2023.

JESSICA SHAPIRO,  
*Senior Counsel, House Office of the Legislative Counsel, Washington, DC.*

DEAR Ms. SHAPIRO: Over the last two decades, you have played a vital role drafting the words of thousands of health policies—many of which have become transformative laws—and you have done so with integrity, professionalism, and meticulousness.

When you began your career in the U.S. House of Representatives, America still had gaping holes in its health insurance system. The words you drafted as part of the Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148), Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-10), and No Surprises Act (P.L. 116-260)—just to name a few—have become the cornerstone for a more equitable health system that has guaranteed access to health services and provided a more robust safety net for millions of Americans. Most recently, the work you did on Medicare drug pricing reform, originally part of the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act, formed a key component or President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-169). Your equanimity, vast knowledge of the intricacies of the Social Security Act (P.L. 74-271), and methodical approach to drafting policy were vital to the success of that process, which required hundreds of hours of drafting, problem-solving, and redrafting. Nearly 70 million Americans will benefit from your unwavering commitment to this work.

Few realize the number of hours of refinement, modification, and revision that go into making a law operational, particularly in the health space. And for every high-profile public law, there are also countless bills and amendments that do not succeed. All of this work requires sacrifices—time away from family and friends as a result of weekend and after-hour intrusions—that often go unacknowledged.

The U.S. health system is in a better place today because of the sacrifices you made during your time at the House Office of the Legislative Counsel, and we thank you and your family for your dedication. Your commitment to public service will live on for decades in the words you have written in the U.S. Code.

Sincerely,

Hon. RICHARD E. NEAL.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF CHARLES "CHUCK" POLAND, JR.

**HON. BARRY MOORE**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the life and legacy of Charles "Chuck" Poland, Jr., who sadly passed away on January 29, 2013, at the age of 66 while performing a heroic act while driving his school bus in Midland City, Alabama.

On January 29, 2013, Charles selflessly defended the lives of the young children on board of his Dale County school bus. What began as a normal winter day in southeastern Alabama for Charles' afternoon route, quickly turned into a senseless attack resulting in the hostage situation and release of a then 5-year-old boy.

Mr. Poland was born July 16, 1946, in Payette, Idaho. As a resident of Newton, Alabama, his courage touched and influenced the lives of many, not only in Alabama's Second Congressional District, but across our great Nation. He was a selfless man whose life exemplified the Lord he served and made the ultimate sacrifice by saving the lives of the children he loved. On the 10th anniversary of his passing, may his sacrifice be remembered as a brave hero who did not flinch in the face of adversity.

In 2013, the Charles "Chuck" Poland, Jr. Act was passed and signed into law. This important law gives appropriate consequences to unauthorized persons who trespass on an Alabama school bus and commit actions that compromise the safety of our Alabama students. Not only is his devotion and strength to our Nation remembered with his incredible service. He is known by protecting the lives of all Alabama students.

Charles dedicated his life to bringing joy to his friends, family, and everybody else around him. He was a loving son, husband, father, brother, and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Mary Janice Poland, 2 children, Lydia and Aaron, and extended members of family.

As we remember Charles, may we remember his kindness and selflessness. As he laid down his life to protect the children, may we recognize his sacrifice on the 10th anniversary and every moment forward.

Charles Poland was a joyous and loved resident of Alabama's Second Congressional District that has left lifelong impressions on many. He is deeply missed, but faithfully remembered by many friends, family members, and all those he made smile.

COMMEMORATING CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE AWARENESS WEEK

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of my constituent, Hayden West, and his family. Hayden was prenatally diagnosed with congenital heart disease, which is the most prevalent birth defect in the United States, affecting one in every 100 births. In

honor of Hayden and the more than 40,000 babies born each year with congenital heart disease, I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize February 7 through 14 as Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week.

Congenital heart disease, sometimes called congenital heart defects, broadly refers to problems with the heart's structure that are present from birth. Current estimates suggest that more than 1 million children and 1.4 million adults in the United States are living with congenital heart disease. There is no known cure for congenital heart disease, as it is a lifelong disease that requires ongoing specialized care, and can impact individuals in a variety of ways, including the development of additional health conditions, such as arrhythmia, pulmonary hypertension, and heart failure. Thanks to the advancement of science and medicine, 85 percent of individuals born with congenital heart disease now live past the age of 18.

It is crucial that individuals planning a family, fetal clinicians, obstetric physicians, pediatricians, and all those in the medical field have a greater understanding of the potential for congenital heart disease in the prenatal term. Continued medical research can provide more identifiable means of the origins and symptoms of congenital heart disease. Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week provides the opportunity for patients and families affected by congenital heart disease to share their experiences and knowledge so that the general public may be aware of how this defect affects our lives.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I want to thank the West family for bringing awareness to this condition and hope my fellow Americans will join me in recognizing Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week.

CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF MATIN GORJI

**HON. JAMIE RASKIN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on the Iranian government to immediately release Matin Gorji. On January 8, 2023, Iranian authorities searched Mr. Gorji's home and arrested him simply because he is a member of the Baha'i faith. According to Mr. Gorji's family, the authorities who searched his home physically abused him and, upon arrest, refused to allow him to take his medication for his liver condition with him. His mother was told he faces a sentence of at least 2 years, yet the specific nature of his charges is unknown.

Sadly, Mr. Gorji is just one of many members of the Baha'i community subjected to harsh persecution in Iran. Since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, thousands more have been arrested and interrogated, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs. In its most recent report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom reported that Iran continues to persecute people of the Baha'i faith, closing their businesses, denying them access to an education, demolishing their

homes without warning, auctioning off their property, and blocking their access to bury their deceased in a place of their choosing, instead requiring them to use a mass grave site.

In its 2021 Report to Congress on International Religious Freedom, the United States Department of State reported that government officials continue to disseminate anti-Baha'i messaging using both traditional and social media. Further, the community is so stigmatized that private sector employers often refuse to hire those of the Baha'i or dismiss them from their jobs.

Today, I call on my House colleagues to stand with Matin Gorji and every member of the Baha'i community in Iran. I call on the Iranian government to immediately release not only Mr. Gorji, but every prisoner of conscience in Iran who is incarcerated simply for their beliefs. It is time to end this egregious repression of religious minorities.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the United States Colored Troops Congressional Gold Medal Act, which would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the African Americans who served with Union forces during the Civil War. Approximately 200,000 African American men served in the Union Army and 19,000 African American men served in the Union Navy. I am proud to present this overdue expression of our national appreciation for these remarkable individuals. Senator CORY BOOKER has introduced the companion bill.

Since the colonial era, African Americans have served the United States in times of war. While African American men served in the Navy since its establishment, there was resistance to enlisting them to take up arms for the Union Army at the start of the Civil War. It was not until January 1, 1863, when President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, that the Union Army was ordered to receive African American men. On May 22, 1863, the United States War Department issued General Order Number 143, which established the Bureau of Colored Troops for the recruitment and organization of regiments of the Union Army composed of African American men, called the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Leaders such as Frederick Douglass encouraged African Americans to enlist to advance the cause of citizenship: "Once let the [B]lack man get upon his person the brass letter, 'U.S.,' let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on [E]arth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship," wrote Douglass.

African American sailors constituted a significant segment of the Union Navy, making up 20 percent of the Navy's total enlisted force. Although there were rank restrictions on African Americans in the Navy before the Civil War, this policy changed after the establishment of the USCT, when the Union Navy started to compete with the Union Army for

enlistment of African Americans. Yet, in practice, most African Americans could not advance beyond the lowest ranks of "boy" and "landman." In the Union Army, the USCT fought at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana; in Petersburg, Virginia; and in Nashville, Tennessee, among other sites. The USCT at first were paid less, were given used uniforms and poor equipment and could never become officers. Many USCT were assigned as guards on fortifications throughout the Union, including the Defenses of Washington, which, by 1865, was one of the most heavily fortified cities in the world. During the Civil War, African American women were not allowed to formally enlist as soldiers or sailors, though they served as nurses, cooks, spies and scouts for the Union Army and the Union Navy.

For generations after the Civil War, the contributions of the African Americans who served with Union forces were excluded from historical memory. Not until Public Law No. 102-412, which I sponsored and which authorized the establishment of a memorial on federal land to honor African Americans who served with Union forces during the Civil War, were they officially commemorated. The African American Civil War Memorial, located in the District of Columbia, features a bronze statue of soldiers, an African American sailor and family, and is surrounded by The Wall of Freedom, which lists the names of the members of the USCT.

Patriots and heroes who rose in service to a nation that would not fully recognize them, the African Americans who served the Union during the Civil War deserve our recognition for their contributions to the grant of emancipation and citizenship for nearly 4 million enslaved people and to the preservation of the Union.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST BANK OF ALABAMA

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 175th Anniversary of First Bank of Alabama.

The City of Talladega was incorporated in 1835 and as it began to grow and thrive, Major James Isbell opened a banking business in 1848. Through the Civil War and reconstruction, the bank stayed open and in 1893 applied for and received a National Bank Charter. The name of the bank was officially changed to The Isbell National Bank of Talladega.

In 1963, after almost 100 years in the "old bank" building, Isbell National Bank moved to a new location on North Street East.

In 1968, the Talladega Superspeedway officially opened. The following year, the bank opened a full service branch in Lincoln, Alabama. In 1988, another branch was opened in Munford, Alabama.

In 2015, The First National Bank of Talladega Board of Directors voted to make the bank a state-chartered bank and adopt the new name, First Bank of Alabama. In 2017, First Bank acquired Bank of Wedowee and ex-

panded their presence into Randolph County. The following year, First Bank opened their seventh office in Clay County and in 2020 an office in Calhoun County.

In 2021, SouthFirst acquisition was finalized, and the bank added 2 more offices in Sylacauga and expanded into Chilton County. In 2022, two offices were added in Cleburne County.

On February 14, 2023, the Annual Shareholder meeting will be held at the Talladega office to celebrate the anniversary of the bank. First Bank is Alabama's oldest, continuously operated bank in the State of Alabama, third oldest in the Southeast and 36th oldest in the country. The bank is led by Talladega native, J. Chad Jones, the bank's 13th President and CEO.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing this milestone for my friends at First Bank of Alabama and wishing them a happy 175th anniversary.

OPPOSITION TO H.J. RES. 26 DISAPPROVING THE ACTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COUNCIL IN APPROVING THE REVISED CRIMINAL CODE ACT OF 2022

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 7, 2023*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 26 a resolution disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022.

This resolution is not only a brazen and misguided measure seeking to uphold decades of racially systemic policies of criminal injustice, it is an insulting attempt to trample on the rights and the will of the people in the District of Columbia.

By subjecting thousands of Black residents of Washington D.C. to criminalization and incarceration, the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022 was the first comprehensive revision of the D.C. code since the year 1901, something that should've been revised long before.

However, in contrast to the majority of other states, D.C. did not update its criminal statutes throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

As a result of the antiquated legislation, which had been in place for decades, the human rights and freedoms of Washingtonians has been compromised, resulting in D.C. having one of the highest imprisonment rates in the nation, whereby Black males account for more than 95 percent of those who are behind bars.

The 2022 revision was a necessary push forward, and for the Republicans within this congress to attempt to undo these revisions, shows the true opinion and intentions of the party.

The revisions helped to correct many of the faults that the District of Columbia continuously ran into with the district itself making the necessary corrections with the support of the public.

The D.C. Criminal Code Reform Commission was formed by the D.C. Council to revise the statutes to guarantee that the revisions of offenses and punishments are precise, consistent, reasonable, and constitutional.