

promoting nutrition, as well as preventing and treating obesity. And during these tough economic times, the school breakfast program also is seeing increasing demand from students who are coming to school hungry.

Currently, there are more than 31 million children who eat school meals five days a week, 180 days a year. While the National School Lunch and breakfast programs do a good job of feeding these children, they have the potential to provide fresher and healthier foods to millions of children in the United States.

In 2010 I helped write the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act to dramatically expand access for millions of children to healthy meals year-round in schools, and provide more meals for at risk children nationwide. The law included legislation that I introduced to provide \$5 million in annual funding for Farm to School programs. Farm to School programs bring locally or regionally grown fresh produce into schools, significantly improving nutrition for children eating school lunches.

During School Breakfast Week, let us resolve to do everything we can to combat childhood hunger and also ensure that the food we are serving kids is as fresh and healthy as possible.

ESSAY BY AMANDA KERSTMAN

### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Amanda Kerstman is a senior at Clear Springs High School in Galveston County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

As a citizen of the United States of America all citizens are given the right to participate in the political process whether it would be to run for office, or vote in a primary election. Having the power as a citizen to participate in the political process is a right given by the United States, but many people in the present time take this as a chore to participate rather than a privilege. The voter turnout in Houston, Texas has decreased every year because of people not willing to go vote in any election, whether it is for a district judge, or an election for the president.

Our constitution was built from people who wanted to shape the new world into a country where people have the right to choose who they want to run their country. It is the citizens responsibility to keep our country a republic and vote for people to represent us. The key to make sure that people will stay politically active is to make sure the youth of the United States stays in-

formed and up to date with what goes on in politics. Once they are informed they have the knowledge to form their own opinion and allow them to take action in supporting a candidate or coming up with their own ideas to run for office one day. Whether a person is inspired to run for local office or for president all helps the political process. Having the Congressional Youth Advisory Council is a great way to get the youth of America involved in political decision-making by letting them able to share their opinion to political leaders. It also allows the youth to be informed on what is going on in congress or in political decision making directly for a political official. Being a part of the political process is very important for American citizens be involved in because if we aren't, we will let down every man that fought for our political freedom.

STATEMENT ON THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS (IBEW), AFL-CIO, LOCAL 716

### HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), AFL-CIO Local 716 in Houston, Texas.

IBEW represents members who work in a wide variety of electrical trade fields, including utilities, construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, manufacturing, railroads and government.

IBEW Local 716 was chartered March 12, 1912, starting with 9 original members and has since grown to represent 4500 members. IBEW Local 716 plays a major role in enhancing the quality of life for all electricians across the Greater Houston Area by negotiating contracts for electricians that secure top paying wages, high-quality health insurance and pensions and creating safer working conditions.

IBEW Local 716 members have built some of our most memorable Houston landmarks that have vastly contributed to shaping Houston as the internationally known city it has become today. Some of which include: the original Humble Building, The Astrodome, the Texas Medical Center, most of Downtown Houston, Minute Maid Field, Metro Light Rail projects, The George R. Brown Center and the Toyota Center.

IBEW Local 716 members are widely known in Houston for their volunteerism and community service, donating countless hours of their personal time in the restoration of the Heights neighborhood projects, including the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center and vast array of other community projects.

I salute the courageous men and women who made IBEW Local 716 an organization which utilizes the skills of its members to make a better life for everyone. I congratulate IBEW Local 716 on 100 years of community building and union spirit, as well as their outstanding dedication to the labor movement and steadfast efforts to uphold workers rights to organize.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,498,306,692,627.99. We've added \$4,871,429,643,714.91 to our debt in 3 years. This is debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SOUTHFIELD CRS

### HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. David's Episcopal Church of Southfield, Michigan on the auspicious occasion of its 60th diamond jubilee anniversary.

St. David's Episcopal Church opened in 1952 and its first mass was held on March 2, inside Oxford School in Berkley, before a permanent church was built.

Founded by parishioners of St. James Episcopal Church, a venerable institution located in neighboring Birmingham, St. David's has been a fixture in the community for more than five decades.

Committed to providing a healthy quality of life for all, St. David's developed St. Anne's Mead, an assisted living and nursing care facility in 1966. The facility is committed to the unique needs of men, women and their families while preserving their dignity and enriching their lives.

Under the devoted and dedicated leadership of the Rev. Chris Yaw, St. David's current Rector, the church holds two Sunday services each week and Taize-style healing services four times a year.

St. David's parishioners are also involved in community outreach. They support local food pantry programs and manage a community garden that produced 500 pounds of fruit and vegetables in 2011, which they donated to surrounding communities.

The church also mentors kindergarten through eighth grade students at nearby Vandenberg World Cultures Academy, providing academic support and leadership skills.

For one week each spring, St. David's turns its facility into a residence for the homeless. The church offers food, shelter and companionship for dozens of men, women and children.

St. David's human service efforts extend beyond the great state of Michigan and the boundaries of our country. The church is one of the founding members of the Haiti Outreach Mission and performs humanitarian work in Port-au-Prince and Mirebalais, two cities that were devastated by the massive earthquake that rocked the country in early 2010. Congregates have helped to provide much needed care and supplies, including anesthetics, antibiotics, pain meds, dressings, operating room