

organization that provided financial and organizational assistance to the Ayers effort. Madison was primarily responsible for the \$503,000,000 settlement that was reached in the Ayers Case.

Dr. Madison was married to Carol A. Madison of Memphis, Tennessee. Her son and his stepson, William L. Poston, is serving in the United States Navy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in extending our sincere gratitude to the life and legacy of Dr. Madison. This extraordinary man was an unsung hero of his generation, who did not seek recognition but always sought justice. Our country was blessed with his service, strengthened by his faith, and bettered by his devotion to his family and the state of Mississippi.

RECOGNIZING THE TWENTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDE-
PENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
KAZAKHSTAN

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the twentieth anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence from the Soviet Union.

On December 25, 1991, the United States became the first country to recognize Kazakhstan as an independent nation. Two decades later, Kazakhstan remains an important U.S. partner and a leader in Central Asia.

During the Soviet era, The Kazakh Steppe served as an important testing ground and launch site for the Soviets' nuclear weapons program. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan was left with a substantial nuclear arsenal consisting of over a thousand strategic nuclear warheads as well as delivery systems including intercontinental ballistic missiles and long-range bombers. This stockpile left Kazakhstan as the world's fourth largest nuclear power.

The Kazakh people understood the devastating power of these weapons, having hosted over 500 Soviet nuclear tests. Rather than embrace its new found status as a nuclear power, Kazakhstan, under the leadership of President Nazarbayev, became the first country to voluntarily renounce its nuclear arsenal. The country subsequently signed and ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1994. By 1995 the last of Kazakhstan's nuclear weapons had been transferred to Russia, with substantial assistance from the United States through the Comprehensive Threat Reduction program. Kazakhstan and the United States continue to cooperate through this program to secure remaining nuclear material as well as chemical and biological weapons, including Anthrax, left over from the Soviet era. After twenty years of independence, Kazakhstan remains a leader on the nonproliferation and an example to others that the path to prosperity does not require nuclear weapons.

Upon independence, Kazakhstan immediately began working to reform its Soviet-style economy. Today, Kazakhstan boasts the most

developed economy in the region. The country has the potential to become an energy power house and to provide a stabilizing influence on global markets. In addition, the government's decision to create a National Oil Fund will help ensure that Kazakhstan's mineral wealth benefits the Kazakh people.

Despite its mineral wealth, Kazakhstan is committed to diversifying its economy and as a result has made significant progress toward membership in the World Trade Organization. This progress is exemplified by the recently signed WTO bilateral market access agreement between Kazakhstan and the United States. This agreement will allow U.S. service providers to benefit from significantly expanded opportunities in Kazakhstan's markets once it joins the WTO. Membership in the WTO is good for Kazakhstan as well as for the major American companies that are increasingly attracted to this developing market.

In the months prior to September 11, 2001, President Nazarbayev voiced his concern that the situation in Afghanistan threatened regional security. Soon after the attacks on the United States, Kazakhstan began supporting coalition operations in Afghanistan by providing access to Kazakh airspace. Since 2009 the Kazakh rail network has been a key link in the Northern Distribution Network which provides an increasingly important supply route into Afghanistan. In addition to its support for military operations, Kazakhstan continues to support Afghanistan's development in a number of ways, including by providing Afghan students with scholarships to study at Kazakh universities.

As a result of policies such as those outlined above: the rejection of nuclear weapons, the embrace of economic reforms, and support for allied operations in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan has become a pillar of stability, and an engine of development in Central Asia. This leadership was reflected in the decision of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to grant Kazakhstan the chairmanship of the organization in 2010.

I respectfully urge President Nazarbayev and the Kazakh people to build on this solid foundation by actively pursuing democratic reforms including the development of a free press, an independent judiciary, a robust civil society, and a transparent political system. Democratic development will not only benefit the Kazakh people but will preserve and strengthen the leadership role that Kazakhstan plays in Central Asia and on the world stage.

In the past twenty years Kazakhstan has become a key ally of the United States. As Kazakhstan continues to develop, we must continue to work to build this important relationship. I congratulate President Nazarbayev and the Kazakh people on twenty years of independence.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 35TH
PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY OF
BISHOP EDGAR VANN OF SEC-
OND EBENEZER CHURCH

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise and ask my colleagues to join me in a tribute to my

friend and a distinguished man of the cloth, Bishop Edgar Vann, on the auspicious occasion of the 35th anniversary of his service to Christ and the community as Pastor of Second Ebenezer Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan.

In 1976, Bishop Edgar L. Vann II assumed the mantle of leadership at Second Ebenezer when, at the time, the congregation numbered less than 100. With great vision and steadfast purpose, Bishop Vann toiled to create the vision of his spiritual calling. By the grace of God, grew the flock of Second Ebenezer numbers to nearly 5000 today. However, Bishop Vann's ecumenical reach extends far beyond the impressive walls of the beloved "Second Eb."

With the good Bishop's message of empowerment and dedication, Second Ebenezer today has grown to be one of Detroit's premier ministries, inspiring its congregants toward the path of life transformation. The inspiration he provides is not just through words and teachings, however. His life's work is an example for us all.

Bishop Vann is not just a builder of better souls, he is a builder and innovator in our community. Established in 1994, Bishop Vann leads the Vanguard Community Development, an institution that has created more than \$80 million of church and of community development in Detroit. Vanguard is leading an entire community toward restoration, healing and empowerment. Bishop Vann preaches extensively throughout the world. He is a mentor, life coach and spiritual father to nearly 200 sons and daughters in the ministry and pastors across the country. His travels have taken him to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Haiti, the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. With each visit, he brings the powerful word of God to each stop.

But Bishop Vann's labor and great work extends beyond his church and his family. In fact, he serves with distinction on several boards. His civic and community organizations affiliations include: Mosaic Youth Theater, Wayne State University's Research & Technology Park, The Skillman Foundation, Detroit Regional Chamber, Michigan Coalition of Human Rights, Detroit Institute of Arts, Henry Ford Health System, Commissioner for the Detroit Police Department, Habitat for Humanity, and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. He also served as a consultant and an advisor to governors, mayors, civic officials and corporate executives throughout the great state of Michigan.

A devoted husband and a dedicated father, Bishop Vann has been married to Elder Sheila R. Vann, a gifted woman of God, since 1978. They have two adult children, Edgar L. Vann III and Ericka Monique Vann.

Mr. Speaker, it is too tall a task to fully detail each and every way that Bishop Vann has made a difference in our community, and indeed, the world. We are truly blessed by his calling, and deeply grateful for his dedication and work. I extend my sincerest wishes on this momentous occasion and hope that his gifts to us continue for another 35 years and beyond.

HONORING PRINCE GEORGE'S
COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS

HON. DONNA F. EDWARDS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Prince George's County Fire and EMS Department and to firefighters across this country who are committed every day to keep our communities safe by putting their own lives at risk during times of our greatest need. They each have made the ultimate contribution to our communities—the contribution of personal sacrifice to ensure our safety and well-being.

On February 24, 2012, a house fire in Riverdale Heights, MD, took an unexpected turn for the worse. The Prince George's County firefighters advanced into the home searching for victims. High winds that Friday night are believed to have caused a sudden rush of fresh air into the home, creating a "fireball" that engulfed the firefighters on the first floor and forced the crews to evacuate the structure.

Unfortunately, seven firefighters from three Maryland Volunteer Fire Departments were in-

jured, transported, and treated at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Six of those injured have been released, with one still remaining at Washington Hospital Center's burn unit. On behalf of the citizens of the Fourth Congressional District, I want to send my appreciation to these individual firefighters and all their colleagues for their relentless dedication to public service. I would also like to recognize the paramedics and the doctors and nurses at the Washington Hospital Center for their compassionate care and treatment these firefighters received.

I would like to discuss briefly each of these brave men:

Firefighter Kevin O'Toole, 22 years old, a member of the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad remains hospitalized in stable but critical condition with burns over 50% of his body;

Firefighter Ethan Sorrell, 21, of the Bladensburg Fire Department sustained burn injuries to his airway and was released last week;

Firefighter Michael McClary, 19, a member of the Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department suffered injuries to his ribs and burns to both hands and was hospitalized overnight before being released;

Firefighter Michael Olszewski, 22, of the Riverdale Fire Department sustained burns to the side of the face and was treated and released that same evening;

Firefighter Roberto Ramirez, 21, of the Riverdale Fire Department suffered ear burns and was treated and released that same evening;

Firefighter Michael Naples, 24, of the Riverdale Fire Department sustained ear and face burns and was treated and released that same evening; and

Assistant Chief Ari Schloss, 36 years of age, of the College Park Volunteer Fire Department suffered burns to the hands and was treated and released that same evening.

I have seen firsthand how difficult a job our local firefighters have. They are tasked with the tremendous responsibility of meeting the increasingly diverse needs of growing populations with diminishing resources. Today, our first responders are being asked to be the first line of defense in our war on terror, in addition to carrying out traditional fire and public safety work.

I want to thank them for their commitment to the citizens and families of this great State. They are Maryland's heroes, and they have my utmost respect and support.