

was born in July 1944 in the Western Region of Ghana. He was a master student who began his schooling at the revered Achimota Secondary School in Accra. He later went on to earn his bachelors and law degrees from the University of Ghana at Legon in 1967. Upon the completion of his PhD in African and Oriental Studies from the University of London, President Mills was selected as a Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University School of Law.

After setting a strong foundation he returned home to educate and impart his lessons on the youth. President Mills dedicated nearly twenty five years to higher academia as a professor in numerous areas such as law, tax and African studies. He was passionate about teaching and politics. First serving in the capacity of Vice President from 1997 through 2001, Dr. Mills was sworn in as President and Commander in Chief of the Republic of Ghana in January of 2009.

I join with President Obama and various world leaders as we remember President Mills, who was often referred to as a calm politician and gentle giant. In 2009, President Obama and the First Family traveled to Ghana in his first presidential visit to Sub-Saharan Africa. President Obama praised President Mills for making Ghana a "good news story" that had good democratic credentials. Under the leadership of President Mills, the United States and Ghana deepened our partnership in the promotion of good governance and economic development.

President John Evan Atta Mills is credited with leading Ghana through a period of stability and economic growth in the midst of unforeseen global circumstances. He is quoted in saying "Every Leader has a period of service". Though his service has come to an unexpected end, as we reflect upon his life and legacy, we can appreciate his tireless efforts that have come to fruition. A shining star in West Africa, Ghana was and still remains a trailblazing nation for the region and continent, with its strong tradition of democracy.

SHINING STARS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last month I had the honor and the privilege to be among our community's proudest at the Kingwood Fallen Heroes Memorial Golf Tournament. Folks teed off to honor three of our local fallen heroes from the Kingwood community: Sergeant William Meeuwsen, Lance Corporal Luke Yepsen and Sergeant Brandon Bury. The money raised at the tournament goes back to veterans through the local Houston Area Chapter of the Blue Star Moms as well as several other military related organizations. This was the first year friends and family organized a golf tournament and they were able to raise \$80,000; donating \$30,000 to our local Blue Star moms. What a way to give back to those who have sacrificed so much—including the Blue Star mom.

The Blue Star Mothers Organization began as a Veteran Service Organization to provide care packages to military serving overseas and offer assistance to their families here at

home. In 1960, the United States Congress chartered the Blue Star Mothers of America as a Veterans Service Organization and they have dutifully kept this organization going strong by supporting families awaiting their child's safe return or consoling those whose sons or daughters who gave their lives for our freedom.

All mothers have that special sparkle about them when they talk about their children, but there is something different in the twinkle when you talk to a mother whose child has gone off to war. One of the toughest parts of being your Congressman is to talk to moms and dads that have lost a child in action. It is a grief I cannot fully relate to and one we all pray we never know. But their courage and their understanding of their child's sacrifice is powerful and inspiring. Every Blue Star mother knows that in a split second their lives can change forever and their Blue Star banner can turn to Gold.

During World War I, if a son had gone off to war in the War to End All Wars, as it was called, a banner was hung in front of the home in the window for each son in the military. This banner had a blue star in the center of it. If the son was killed, a gold star was superimposed over the blue one.

This concept was created by Grace Seibold on Christmas Eve 1918 upon learning that her aviator son was killed in aerial combat in France. Ms. Seibold directed her grief and sorrow to helping the wounded in local D.C. hospitals and formed the Gold Star Mothers to give support for other such moms.

During World War II, my Grandmother Poe hung such a banner with a blue star in the front window of her home in the country. My dad went off to war when he was just 18. When my grandmother died, it was one of the few items she had saved. That banner never had to have a gold star placed on it because my dad returned safely. These banners have been carried throughout all of America's wars since World War I.

As a father of four, I can think of nothing worse than to lose one of my children. No parent wants their son or daughter killed in unknown foreign lands. No parent wants their child to predecease them and no parent wants their child to die in their youth. But it happens, and the grief can only be understood by other such parents.

Mothers are special, particularly the mothers of those who wear the American uniform. It seems to me the strongest bond in all of creation is the bond between a mother and her child. The good Lord made it that way on purpose, and when that bond is broken by the loss of a child, that wound just never heals.

One out of every ten people in the military is from the State of Texas. Roughly 10 percent of the total killed in Iraq and Afghanistan has been Texans. Yet sons and daughters throughout America, and especially Texas, continue to join our military knowing that they will no doubt go into the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, and they leave behind their parents, their mothers.

So as we show honor and respect to America's children who serve, let us show American compassion and ultimate gratitude for the mothers of those troops who display the Blue and Gold Star sacrifice from their windows. And the next time we pass a house with one of these stars maybe we should stop and say a prayer and say "thank you" because of that

special mother who gave that child for the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRESSIONAL REPLACEMENT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ENERGY-RESTRICTING AND JOB-LIMITING OFFSHORE DRILLING PLAN

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 24, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6082) to officially replace, within the 60-day Congressional review period under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, President Obama's Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf Oil & Gas Leasing Program (2012-2017) with a congressional plan that will conduct additional oil and natural gas lease sales to promote offshore energy development, job creation, and increased domestic energy production to ensure a more secure energy future in the United States, and for other purposes:

Mr. STARK. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 6082, the so-called "Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy-Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan." This bill opens up nearly every last piece of our public lands to drilling, giving even more to Big Oil. The bill would require oil and gas leasing off the East Coast, from Maine to South Carolina, off of Southern California and in the important fishery of Bristol Bay off Alaska. It opens up California's coastline to oil and gas companies as early as 2013. If this bill were to become law, areas that have previously been deemed off limits to oil development by state governments would be put up for lease.

This bill also fails to secure safety reforms for offshore drilling, nor does it ensure that oil companies are paying their fair share to drill on public lands. The California Coastline is an international treasure and is one of the primary drivers of our state's economy. We must protect our coastlines and the vital ecosystems they embody. We cannot place it at risk of an oil spill or give it away to reckless, profit-seeking oil companies. We cannot and will not drill our way to energy independence. Continuing to make our cars more efficient, investing in clean and renewable energy, ending subsidies and tax breaks for the fossil fuel industry, and putting a price on carbon emissions is how we can obtain a secure and sustainable energy future.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this senseless and harmful legislation by joining me in voting "no."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE REOPENING OF ST. JAMES CHURCH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of St. James' Church, one of the 11