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TRIBUTE TO ANDREW WHELAN

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 28, 2012

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, now that we have returned to our districts before the election, I'd like to highlight a valuable staff member of mine who recently left my office. I rise today to honor an outstanding golfer, a barbecue master, and an intensely devoted San Francisco 49ers fan who ably and professionally served for many years as my press secretary, Andrew Whelan. Andrew and his fantastic wife Paige recently moved back to their home state of California, and I've greatly missed his keen advice and genuine friendship.

Andrew started the Capitol Hill chapter of his career nearly seven years ago, working on the House Committee on Resources, eventually rising to deputy press secretary. In December 2006, I hired him as my press secretary, where he has successfully served the people of Oregon ever since.

Mr. Speaker, there may be no more challenging job on Capitol Hill than being a press secretary to a Member of Congress who was a press secretary to a Member of Congress. But Andrew went above and beyond by facing this demanding role with unflinching resolve and dedication—all while making it look nearly effortless and easy.

Before pursuing federal public service in Washington, Andrew worked for a state assemblyman in California, and edited his alma mater's campus newspaper, the California Aggie at University of California, Davis.

A Member of Congress relies on his or her staff to be his eyes and ears across the district—especially when the district covers 70,000 square miles, like Oregon's Second. Andrew has always been a highly effective representative of me whether it be when speaking to a national news outlet, the local hometown newspaper reporter, or an eager young student angling for an inside scoop for a school project on Congress.

Andrew made it a point to maintain a genuine connection to constituents he came into contact with in all corners of the district—those who agree with my policy positions and those who do not. He listened sincerely to their points of view and, even if they challenged him with extreme emotion, his responses were always civil and respectful and his demeanor was patient.

Andrew made it his highest goal to keep in touch with the citizens of the Second District. He believes, as do I, that we are here to do the people's business, and the people have

the right to know what their government is doing. It was Andrew's job to help communicate what we as Members are doing back to the people we serve.

Andrew played a leading role in a number of public affairs efforts that made a real difference in our country. From helping to uncover negligence in federal agencies, to spotlighting an unfair and misleading National Guard bonus program for new recruits, to restoring housing rights for homeless veterans, to developing many other communications strategies that forced the government to better help the people they are supposed to serve, Andrew accomplished much for his fellow citizens during his time in Washington.

As a press secretary, Andrew had to have a handle on a wide range of policy issues—and often had to know the issues as well as or better than the policy staff. He had to figure out how to explain complicated issues to people, often on a very tight deadline. To better keep in touch with people, he helped me expand the use of social media to more effectively reach Oregonians on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

On a personal level, Andrew's love of golf is only overshadowed by his love for his wife, Paige. According to his mother, he was seen swinging a golf club even in diapers and won his first tournament at eight years old. He's even played in the qualifier for the U.S. Open twice. Also according to his mother, the only time he's looked happier than his time on the golf course was the day he married Paige.

While living in Washington, DC, Andrew became an uncle, and he enjoyed being able to visit his brothers Don and Rob and his four nieces and nephews who live here on the East Coast.

But now Andrew and Paige have moved back home to California. While Team Walden was very sorry to see him go, I know his parents Bill and Lindy are happy to be close to their son once again. I speak for all my current and former staff when I say we have missed Andrew very much. I should also add that I know the folks at Potbelly's around Washington have also been very sad to see him go, but delighted at the prospects of him opening the first Potbelly's franchise in the Bay Area which will be necessary to satisfy his cravings.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Andrew and Paige the best of luck as they return West and pursue new personal and professional endeavors. Andrew, thanks for exemplary service to the Congress and citizens of Oregon.

TRIBUTE TO RAMONA ESBECK

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 28, 2012

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ramona Esbeck

on the coming celebration of her 100th birthday. Ramona will celebrate a century of life on October 7th, 2012.

Our world has changed a great deal during the course of Ramona's life. Since her birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Ramona has lived through eighteen United States Presidents and twenty-two Governors of Iowa. In her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Ramona in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish her a very happy 100th birthday. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Ms. Esbeck on reaching this incredible milestone, and wishing her even more health and happiness in the years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GRAND OPENING OF CHRISTIAN FAITH WORLD MINISTRIES CHURCH

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 28, 2012

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Reverend Dr. Ronald E. Hodges and his congregation on the grand opening of the Christian Faith World Ministries Church (CFWMC) in Addison, Texas on September 30, 2012.

Through the prayer, hard work and leadership of Reverend Hodges, the vision of a new church facility is now a reality. Strategically located, CFWMC plans to reach out to the people of Addison as well as to the neighboring communities of Carrollton, Farmers Branch, and North Dallas. The church offers a variety of ministries, including counseling, fellowship groups, and education programs, designed to provide a wide range of opportunities for individuals to serve, connect, and establish community. Faith is of great importance and plays a vital role in our society. It strengthens families and relationships, instills values and principles, and encourages participation for the betterment of our communities.

I am delighted to recognize Reverend Hodges and Christian Faith World Ministries Church as they celebrate this special occasion. Mr. Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in expressing our heartfelt congratulations on the grand opening of this new facility. May God bless Reverend Hodges and his congregation.