

days and weeks following. The American people still haven't been provided answers to serious questions. For example, why was additional security denied to the ambassador? What intelligence was known about the threat prior to the attacks? There are also serious questions about links of this terrorist attack to the protests at the U.S. embassies in Cairo, Egypt, Tunis, Tunisia and Sanaa, Yemen that same week—where each American compound was breached by individuals allegedly linked to al Qaeda-affiliated groups. What, if any, were the connections between these incidents and the attack in Benghazi?

These questions are too serious—and the consequences too grave—to be brushed aside. There are critical legislative decisions the next Congress will have to make based on the answers to these questions. But more importantly, the American people deserve answers to these questions—including open hearings and an unclassified report.

The select committee I am proposing should draw from the existing congressional investigations by including the chairman and ranking member of each committee of jurisdiction—Intelligence, Foreign Affairs, Judiciary, Armed Services and Oversight and Government Reform—as well as five additional Republicans appointed by the Speaker and two additional Democrats appointed by the Minority Leader.

I appreciate the support I have received for this resolution from the original cosponsors, as well as the Heritage Foundation. I also submit for the record a recent op-ed that was published on RealClearPolitics.com by former Senator Fred Thompson articulating the benefits of a unified select committee. Senator Thompson has a unique perspective on the need for this committee given his experience as counsel on the Senate select committee on Watergate.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the families of the victims, and the American people, to fully investigate this terrorist attack. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

[Nov. 28, 2012]

INVESTIGATING BENGHAZI: WHY WE NEED A
SELECT COMMITTEE
(By Fred Thompson)

As we fixate on the latest version of Gen. David Petraeus' testimony or the misleading statements of Susan Rice, I suggest that we stop and think about the size of what we are dealing with. The Benghazi tragedy raises questions concerning the protection of our embassies, the performance and capabilities of our military and our intelligence community, as well as the decisions of high-ranking officials in the Department of Defense, the State Department, the White House and possibly the Justice Department.

The scope of the questions that involve an array of officials, and sensitive agencies and departments of our government, is unprecedented. The inquiry into what happened and why, along with who is or should be accountable, calls for a focused, responsible effort equal to the seriousness and the complexities the issues.

I've seen this rodeo before, both in a constructive manner (Watergate, where I served as a counsel) and a less-than-constructive one (Clinton-era investigations, where I chaired a committee that probed at least one facet of the various scandals). On our present course, the prospects for a relatively short but thorough, credible, bipartisan congressional investigation are not good. The prospects for a disjointed, drawn-out mess, re-

plete with partisan bickering, are much better.

It is easy to identify at least eight congressional committees (four in each chamber) with claims of jurisdiction in the Benghazi matter. No committee has jurisdiction over all of it, and several committees have jurisdiction over parts that overlap with the jurisdictions of other committees. Some of the committee hearings will involve classified information and will be conducted behind closed doors. Members of "Committee A" will not know what a witness told "Committee B" in a closed hearing. Gen. Petraeus' recent appearance on Capitol Hill demonstrates how difficult it can be to get a consistent story when the witness is making multiple appearances before even the same committee.

Perhaps not all committees with jurisdiction will have hearings, but if half of them do it will produce competing hearings, with competing staffs and competing press conferences over much of Capitol Hill. It will also take longer than necessary, as government officials shuffle back and forth giving repeat performances. Different committee chairmen and their committees will make different rulings on document production, whether to move for immunity for witnesses who refuse to testify on the basis of the 5th Amendment, and a host of other matters.

This is simply not the most efficient and credible way to proceed. And it is less likely to arrive at the truth. The seriousness of the matter calls for something better. It calls for a select committee that is given a specific mandate, a budget and a cut-off date that can be adjusted if it is agreed upon. It needs to be comprised of members of both parties who have been selected by their leadership because of their proven integrity, reputation for fairness, and expertise in a given area.

In a matter fraught with political implications, it is especially important that Congress accept its responsibility and minimize partisanship as much as possible. History demonstrates that this goal is much easier to achieve with a handful of selected people than it is with many. Since 1789, when Congress investigated a failed military expedition, select committees have been utilized to serve such important and sensitive functions, and the Benghazi matter should follow in that long tradition, whether by means of a joint committee of both houses of Congress or by either chamber.

Most select committees have become historical footnotes. Some, however, are well remembered because of the contribution they made to helping Congress carry out its duties of legislating, overseeing the executive branch and educating the American people as to the operation of their government. Ironically, it is because of the success of these panels that some members of Congress and others oppose the formation of one in this case.

They say that forming a select committee for a matter such as Benghazi, where a consulate and four American lives were lost, would attach too much importance to the investigation. They fear that it would be equating it with Watergate. Of course, if the Watergate standard, as they define it, is now the operative standard for the formation of a select committee, then seldom, if ever, will another select committee be formed.

Critics of the select committee miss the point on several levels. First of all, if indeed a comparison is to be made, one must look at the seriousness of facts and issues presented concerning Benghazi and compare them with the seriousness of facts and issues presented at the times when other select committees, such as Watergate, were formed. So compare the Watergate burglary with what we have here. Can there be any doubt that Benghazi passes the Watergate test?

The wisdom of utilizing a select committee should not just be judged on the outcome of the committee's work; dramatic results are not always achieved or warranted. The select Watergate Committee is a beneficial reference point, not because of the end result of its investigation a year and a half after it was formed, but because of the process Congress utilized to deal with a difficult situation.

At that time, we had a Republican president and a Congress controlled by the Democrats. Yet the Senate voted unanimously to form the committee. Democratic leadership appointed Sen. Sam Ervin, reputed to be the chamber's leading constitutional scholar, to chair the committee. The Republican leader appointed Sen. Howard Baker to be the vice chairman and leading member of his party on the committee—a senator who was respected on both sides of the aisle. These men protected the legitimate partisan interests of their respective parties and the path was not always smooth, especially behind closed doors, but they understood that their colleagues, as well as the nation, were depending upon them to be responsible and seek the truth. Authority and accountability were clearly placed on the committee, and its members performed accordingly.

Select committees are not perfect creations by any means. A clear narrative is often difficult to produce under any circumstances. However, a select committee is simply much more likely to produce focused and credible results. Soon we will see if the United States Congress is still capable of coming together toward the common goal of getting to the bottom of a very serious matter. Or, are decisions about select committees simply reflective of positions based upon whose ox is in danger of being gored?

TRIBUTE TO ANN DAWSON
AUGUST

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is a bitter-sweet occasion as I rise today to congratulate Ms. Ann Dawson August on being named Executive Director of the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority in Birmingham, Alabama. As she accepts this position, she is leaving the Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA) in Sumter, South Carolina, where she has served as the Executive Director of SWRTA for the past 11 years. She leaves behind a stellar record and will be sorely missed.

A native of Sumter, South Carolina, Ms. August spent 39 years in Philadelphia, where she attended public schools and La Salle University before working for 13 years for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the fifth largest transit authority in the country. In 1997, she demonstrated her versatility when she transferred her talents from the urban SEPTA system to SWRTA, the second largest urban and rural transportation authority in South Carolina.

Ann's service in the transportation arena has extended far beyond SWRTA. She is a member of the Sumter County Transportation Committee and the Transportation Research Analysis Committee for the Transportation Research Board in Washington, DC. From 2009 to 2011, she was the Chair of the Transit Cooperative Research Program Oversight and

Project Selection Committee, and she is currently the Southeast Regional Director of the Community Transportation Association of America.

Ms. August has garnered media acclaim during this distinguished career. In 2007, SWRTA was featured in Mass Transit Magazine, and in 2008, Ms. August contributed to the magazine's "Manager's Forum" on the topic "How a Board Can Help Directors Manage Systems."

An asset to the community in numerous capacities outside of transportation, Ms. August previously served as Vice President of the YWCA of the Upper Lowlands Membership Committee and is the immediate past Chair of the United Way of Sumter. She served 30 years in the Army Reserves, retiring in 2004. Ann is married to Henry August Jr., a transportation professional who retired from SEPTA after serving 35 years in the industry; they have two adult children and five grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. August will be missed in South Carolina, but I have no doubt that our loss will be Alabama's gain. I ask that you and my colleagues join me in wishing Ms. Ann Dawson August all the best and Godspeed in her future endeavors.

HONORING OFFICER THOMAS DECKER UPON HIS DEATH

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Officer Thomas Decker of the Cold Springs Police Department. On November 29, Officer Decker was killed in the line of duty while trying to help a man believed to be suicidal.

Officer Decker was a Minnesota boy through and through, growing up on a dairy farm near Cold Spring. After attending Rocori High School, he went on to serve as a police officer for 10 years, serving in the communities of Isle, Watkins, Kimball, and the Cold Spring/Richmond Police Department. He bravely served the citizens of central Minnesota and those who knew him called him a hero who loved his family. He leaves behind a wife, four young children, parents, siblings and a community who loved him.

Officer Decker's death tears at the heartstrings of a small town who knows all too well the sting of heartbreaking tragedy. This community lost another son to senseless bloodshed. It is hard to grasp why such violence occurs, but it is important that friends and neighbors stick together in these trying times. My thoughts and prayers are with the Decker family as they deal with this painful loss, especially five-year-old Devon, six-year-old Justin, seven-year-old Jade and eight-year-old Kelly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this body join with me in mourning the loss of this brave and noble police officer who represented not only Minnesota, but a force which protects citizens across this great country.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF DR. PHILLIP HAMMONDS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues Congressman SPENCER BACHUS and Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL in asking for the House's attention today to recognize Dr. Phillip Hammonds who is retiring as the Superintendent of Jefferson County Schools after nearly 40 years of service to Alabama's school systems.

Dr. Phillip Hammonds received his Bachelor degree in English Education from Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri. Soon after, he received his Master's degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He went on to earn Doctoral degrees from both the University of Montevallo and the University of Alabama.

While earning his numerous degrees, Dr. Hammonds also served Alabama schools in various capacities. From 1973–1983 he worked for Sylacauga High School. In 1983, he began working for the Sylacauga City School System, where he stayed until 1996. He also served as the Superintendent of Sylacauga City Schools from 2001–2003. From 1996–1997, Dr. Hammonds was the Superintendent of Education for Pell City Schools. In 1997, he began his work for the Jefferson County School System, and in 2004 he was appointed Superintendent.

Because of his faithful service to Alabama's school systems, Dr. Hammonds has been the recipient of numerous awards. In 1989, he was honored as the Outstanding Graduate Student in School Administration at the University of Montevallo. In 1991, he received a Faculty Recognition Award from the University of Alabama. He was also named the Outstanding Alumnus in School Administration by the University of Montevallo in 1996. In 2007, he was recognized as the Outstanding Superintendent of the Year by the Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers. Finally, in 2010, he was appointed to the Board of Directors for the The Capstone at the University of Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, we join his family, friends and the state of Alabama in this celebration in his honor. We will miss Dr. Hammonds' leadership in Alabama, and wish him the very best.

HONORING UNITED STATES NAVY VETERANS

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor our veterans.

There are no words that can express the gratitude that the American people owe all of the men and women who choose to serve the United States of America in the armed services. We are all humbled by the sacrifice they make—knowingly putting themselves in harm's way while also leaving loved ones behind. This commitment is the mark of America's finest

citizens and those who answer to a higher calling. I would like to honor, from the Navy:

Michelle Luz Trinidad, Stephanie Tillman, Andrew Kissoon, Gary Austin, Emmanuel Hernandez, Carlo D. Casanova, Kristie Hamm, Relles Campos, Raymond Farmer, Peter Calhoun, Ruben Gallardo, Percy Fernando Monroe, Jeffrey W. Butler, Jr., Marquis Rashann Bellamy, Marcus M. White, John C. Carter, Jr., Michael C. Thompson, Frederick Alan Edwards, Kenyatta Bennett, Jamie Shire, Cameron Zbikowski, Sam Owens, Neville Bain, Alvine Burke, Freddie Berrios, Janette Ramos Chandler, Rafael Trinchet, Henry Elam, Willie B. Taylor, Mae Christian, Randolph Mobley, John M. Lockier, Charles W. Wright, Brian F. Kipp, David Nunez, Ben Rape, Stephanie Tillman, James F. Wilson Jr., Jackie Bernard Singleton, Richard Victor Powell, Mary Lesic, Angus Laney, Rock Daze, Franklin Johnson;

Finally, it is not our tanks, weapons or machinery that make the United States Armed Forces the best military in the world. It is our young men and women who serve professionally with honor and distinction. If not for these exemplary citizens, freedom and the American way of life would not be safe and secure. For these sacrifices, we respect and should commend their service everyday of the year. Congress has designated, November 11th 2012 as the official day showing our gratitude.

Please join me in honoring these American heroes for their bravery and sacrifice in defense of this great nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I was out of town due to a family medical situation and was not present for the rollcall vote numbered 611 on Thursday, November 29, 2012. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Rollcall Vote No. 611—Resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 6429, the STEM Jobs Act: "no."

LT ENVIRONMENTAL, INC. (LTE)

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud LT Environmental, Inc. for providing decades of expertise through innovative technologies in helping our citizens identify and eliminate environmental liabilities.

Since 1992, LT Environmental or LTE, has performed environmental consulting services for a diverse range of industries including oil and gas, transportation, manufacturing, real estate, government, and public and private property owners. The high level of devotion LTE has shown to our communities serves as a prime example of their quality service.

LTE's primary goal of rapid site closure allows for businesses, many of whom would