

## SAFE RETURN OF ARMANDO TORRES

**HON. FILEMON VELA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 18, 2013*

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to join my colleagues in urging the State Department and the government of Mexico to do everything that they possibly can to ensure the safe return of Armando Torres.

It has been over two months since Armando was taken captive by armed gunmen while visiting his father in Mexico. A native of South Texas, Armando served 7 years in the Marine Corps including combat tours in Iraq. Though he survived a war zone, a greater threat to his safety came closer to home when he drove across the Los Indios Bridge into Mexico.

What should have been an uneventful trip became a nightmare for the Torres family when Armando was kidnapped. This is a sadly all too common occurrence in Mexico with as many as 70 kidnappings occurring every day.

The cartel violence in Mexico has had a profound impact on the entire nation with over 60,000 killed.

The unprecedented level of violence has greatly affected the United States as well. Relations with our neighbor to the south have been strained as the free flow of lawful commerce and visitors has been threatened by crime and illegal trafficking. Over 600 U.S. citizens have been murdered in Mexico. We talk about the Global War on Terror, but the cartel violence in Mexico has proven to be a far more deadly threat. We cannot and we will not sit idly by and watch our ally Mexico fight this war alone. We are committed to working together to address the problems which face our two nations.

The number of victims of this deadly war is staggering, but Armando Torres is not just a statistic. He is not just one of the victims of the cartel violence which has ravaged Mexico. He is a Marine, a son, a nephew, a cousin, a husband, and a father. And our nation must do everything in our power to bring him home.

I stand with my colleagues in the United States Congress today in support of Armando. We will not rest until he is returned safely to his family and friends.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE "ALEXIS AGIN IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION ACT OF 2013"

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 18, 2013*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my friend and colleague, SAM JOHNSON, to introduce this bipartisan legislation to protect Americans from identity theft.

I have long been concerned about the problem of identity theft, where all too often the Social Security number, SSN, which is assigned to make sure Americans get their earned Social Security benefits, is the key to committing fraud. For a number of years, Chairman JOHNSON and I have worked together on a bipartisan basis with other members of our Social Security Subcommittee to

find ways to better protect Americans from identity theft.

One of the most troubling forms of identity theft is fraud involving a deceased individual, which victimizes grieving families. Our subcommittee learned about a family that not only lost their young daughter to a terrible cancer—but then was dealt another blow when they found that their child's identity had been stolen and used to collect a fraudulent tax refund.

Our bill aims to stop this fraud in its tracks. It is named in honor of the child whose family asked our Subcommittee to make sure what happened to them did not happen to another family: the "Alexis Agin Identity Theft Protection Act of 2013." No one should have to endure both the loss of a loved one and then the financial stress of dealing with identity theft because a fraudster has appropriated the person's identity.

The Death Master File, DMF, a prime source of SSNs used in identity theft, is a database of death information reported to the Social Security Administration, SSA. However, a lawsuit forced SSA to make this database available to anyone who wants it. SSA needs this information—it is used to make sure earned benefits from the Social Security Trust Fund are only paid to the living. But SSA does not want to make it available to fraudsters, and they should not be required to do so.

Our bill would restrict access to the DMF to legitimate users and release to the general public only death data that is older than three years, at which point it is relatively useless to ID thieves bent on using it for fraud. Over time, our bill also enables the States to take back the responsibility of handling their death data and ends SSA's public release of the DMF for good. The President's budget proposes a similar approach that the Joint Committee on Taxation projects would save \$793 million over ten years by reducing the potential for fraudulent tax refunds. The National Taxpayer Advocate and the SSA Inspector General have also called for the public release of the DMF data to end.

I applaud the bipartisan approach we took to resolving this problem for the American people. I hope we can learn from the Agin family's tragic experience and move swiftly to enact this bipartisan, commonsense measure to reduce the harm of identity theft.

CHAMPION OF HISPANIC YOUTH  
JOHN LOPEZ**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 18, 2013*

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. John Lopez, a resident of my district who passed away on July 2, 2013.

John was born and raised in Santa Ana, California. He went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree from University of California, Irvine and a Masters from the University of La Verne.

One of his proudest affiliations was through the work he did with the American GI Forum, where John rose to serve as the California State Treasurer for the organization.

John was also a member of the Latino Advocates for Education, where he worked on

documenting the military service of Latino veterans. He also helped Anaheim Latino youth gain scholarships through his membership and participation in the LULAC Anaheim Council.

A 26-year veteran of Northrop Grumman, John was a true patriot who carried out his duties with passion and integrity.

John and his wife, Linda, founded the Hispanic Advisory Council to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates of Orange County). Their efforts continue to impact the Hispanic youth that CASA serves.

John Lopez was a true public servant to his community. While he will be greatly missed, his contributions will benefit future generations.

HONORING THE NAPA COUNTY  
FARM BUREAU**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 18, 2013*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Napa County Farm Bureau on the occasion of its centennial anniversary.

The Napa County Farm Bureau was initiated in 1913 when at a meeting of the Napa Grange, H. J. Baade stated that the University of California at Berkeley would hire a scientifically trained man with at least four years of practical farming experience and place him in any county that would agree to organize a Farm Bureau. The Napa Grangers instructed the District Attorney to assist the Secretary of the Napa Chamber of Commerce to organize a Bureau of at least one-fifth of all the farmers in the county.

Today, the mission of the Napa County Farm Bureau is to ensure the proper political, social, and economic climate for the continuation of a strong, vibrant and sustainable agricultural economy. The Farm Bureau is one of the county's major voices for land stewardship, agricultural sustainability, and open space preservation and conservation. Over the last four decades, the Napa County Farm Bureau has led the resistance to the trend toward paving over farmland across the state and nation, and worked with County government leaders to designate agriculture as its most precious resource—the highest and best use of the land.

Countless members of the community have given much of their time and talent to help improve the agricultural conditions of Napa County. The organization is guided by a Board of Directors and supported by a multitude of dedicated volunteers. The Napa County Farm Bureau will honor 52 Centennial Napa County farm families who have been farming in the county for 100 or more years on August 3rd.

Mr. Speaker, throughout its 100 year history, the Napa County Farm Bureau has worked to protect family farms and ranches, maintain and enhance Napa's rich agricultural heritage, and promote good stewardship of Napa's soils, watersheds, wildlife habitat and open space. It is therefore appropriate that we acknowledge the Napa County Farm Bureau today and wish it great success in future years.