

me in recognizing his dedication and accomplishment.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 2013*

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 435, I was unavoidably detained at a personal doctor's appointment.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 2013*

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast rollcall votes on May 23rd. Had I been present, I would have cast the following votes:

On rollcall 180, I would have voted "no;" on rollcall 181, I would have voted "no;" on rollcall 182, I would have voted "yes;" on rollcall 183, I would have voted "no."

#### A TRIBUTE TO ALBA PEREZ

### HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 2013*

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Alba Perez for being named a 2013 Women of Influence honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Each year, Business Record undertakes an exhaustive review to identify a standout group of women in the Greater Des Moines area who, as the publication notes, "have made a difference." An impressive group of inspiring female leaders are selected annually for this prestigious distinction, which is based on combined criteria of community involvement, career success, and being a role model for other women to emulate. The 2013 Women of Influence honorees join an impressive roster of more than 130 women who have changed and are continuing to change our communities for the better.

In her work, Alba Perez, presently the Executive Officer of the Office of Latino Affairs at the Iowa Department of Human Rights, has been inspired by advice she received as a child from her mother: "Leave things better than how you found them." Ms. Perez has spent much of her career trying to help Latinos and other underrepresented communities, advocating for what she calls meaningful inclusion or helping Latina women who struggle with English. In her 12 years at the Greater Des Moines Partnership, she managed the diversity committee tasked with helping make Des Moines a more inclusive community. She also has helped launch Alianza: Latino Business Association, and the dance instruction organization now known as Salsa Des Moines. Ms. Perez has been heavily in-

involved in the League of United Latin American Citizens of Iowa, and the Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Alba Perez in the United States Congress, and I am pleased to recognize her for working to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating her on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2013 Women of Influence class continued success.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 2013*

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 428, I was unavoidably detained in a meeting off the Hill at the White House with the President.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

#### STOP GOVERNMENT ABUSE ACT

SPEECH OF

### HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 1, 2013*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, here we go again. It's become a ritual with the House Republican Leadership to devote the dying hours of the legislative calendar to the task of beating up on federal employees.

You'll remember that the last time we found ourselves in this position was on January 1, 2013. As the clock ticked down the minutes closing the 112th Congress, instead of addressing the host of pressing financial matters that threatened the fiscal health of this nation, my Republican colleagues chose to focus those precious minutes on legislation to clawback the meager .5% COLA promised to federal employees when the Continuing Resolution expired in March of that year.

As this country faced a wave of serious economic difficulties, instead of spending the time focusing on legislation to address these challenges, Republicans in Congress turned their attention to squeezing even more out of the hard working federal employees who had already contributed \$60 billion of their pay as part of a two-year pay freeze. By no fault of their own, our dedicated federal workers have become pawns in a ritualistic game fashioned to distract the American public from the real challenges confronting our country.

This week, this body considers a number of bills that again scapegoat federal employees. I rise today to ask my colleagues not to fall for this game again and to reject this gratuitous and disrespectful attack on our federal workers.

I ask my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 2879, the Stop Government Abuse Act because the bill eliminates due process protections for members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) by allowing agency heads to

fire SES employees without giving them advance notice or an opportunity to address the allegations against them. The bill would place the burden of proof on SES employees by requiring them to prove their innocence when seeking reinstatement. Democrats on the House Committee on Oversight tried to amend the bill to preserve existing due process protections for these employees, but their efforts were rejected.

Further, the bill would limit bonuses federal workers may receive to 5% of basic pay during sequestration and limit the number of Senior Executives who may receive performance awards to 33% of those eligible in each agency. If passed, this bill could further harm our government's ability to attract the best and the brightest managers, make it more difficult to retain current employees and exacerbate personnel shortages in nursing, information technology, cybersecurity, and acquisition where shortages have been a major concern for some time.

Federal employees dedicate their lives to the service of our nation. They protect our borders, care for our wounded service members and work to discover treatments and cures for diseases that touch virtually every American family. With their diligence and unwavering devotion, they have earned the right to be treated with respect and they do not deserve to be the target of arbitrary attacks seemingly just to fill space on the legislative calendar.

#### CELEBRATING NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK, 2013

### HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 2013*

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize National Health Center Week, celebrating the more than 1,200 health centers providing vital health care for 22 million individuals at more than 9,000 locations across the country. During the week of August 11–17th, celebrations of National Health Center Week will be taking place at West County Health Centers and Petaluma Health Center in my Congressional district.

America's community health centers are the core of our health care system and the nation's social safety net, delivering high quality, cost-effective, and accessible primary and preventative care to individuals regardless of their ability to pay. Health centers are located in medically underserved areas and controlled locally by patient-majority boards, making each health center responsive to the needs of the individual community it serves.

From the Marin Community Clinic to Crescent City Health Care Center, California's Second Congressional District, which I am honored to represent, is served by a network of vibrant community health centers offering patient-focused, coordinated healthcare that families and individuals need.

National Health Center Week offers us the opportunity to recognize all those responsible for the continued success and growth of community health centers nationwide. Since this program's inception 50 years ago, health centers have served those in need with comprehensive, high quality, cost effective, and accessible health care, and I am grateful for their role in the North Coast community.