VERDATE MAR 15 2010 06:31 JUN 10, 2014 JKT 039060 PO 00000 E:\CR\FM\A09JN8.037 E09JNPT1SMARTINEZ ON DSK6TPTVN1PROD WITH REMARKS

was trained at the National Fire Academy in

Birmingham on November 14, 2007 after 26

way up the ranks of the department. He was

a first responder would span more than 30

Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Depart-

mentary public service will bring peace to those

comforted in knowing that his legacy of exem-

plary service will remain with us.

Birmingham Fire and Rescue Chief Ivor J.

Chief Brooks was sworn into the Bir-

mingham Fire Department in 1982. He served in

a wide range of capacities throughout his

career, including as a firefighter, fire chief,

and fire marshal.

Throughout his tenure, Chief Brooks

served as a leader and mentor for his
colleagues. He was known for his

energetic and personable leadership style,

which earned him the respect and

admiration of his peers.

During his time as fire chief, Chief

Brooks was committed to protecting and

serving the community. He worked

tirelessly to improve the Fire Department's

operations and services, and he was

instrumental in securing funding

opportunities to support the department's

efforts.

Chief Brooks was a dedicated family

man, and he was married to Joyce E.

Brooks. He was the father of four children:

Ivon, Nyyah, Ivor, Jr. and Matthew and one

grandchild, August Rayne Howell.

On behalf of a grateful nation and state, we

commemorate the passing of Birmingham Fire and

Rescue Chief Ivor J. Brooks. He will be

remembered as a true public servant and

leader in the community.

Our country made progress with the repeal of

“Don’t Ask, Don’T Tell,” which I was proud to

support. Our nation is now stronger and our

people are safer thanks to the sacrifices made

by these brave Americans, who no longer

need to choose between service and silence.

Chief Brooks was one of the many heroes for the bet-
ter. In July 2011, President Obama and his

administration concluded that a critical section of the

Defense of Marriage Act is no longer constitutionally

defensible. The Supreme Court agreed and on June 26, 2011, handed down the landmark decision in United States v. Windsor, 570 U.S. 12 (2013), which struck down Section 3 of DOMA because it violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment by treating relationships that had equal status under state law differently under federal law.

That decision accelerated the movement for

marriage equality and today 19 states now recognize same-sex marriages.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 50th anni-

versary of the landmark Civil Rights Act of

1964, brilliantly shepherded to passage by one of

the greatest Texans, President Johnson, which

outlawed discrimination in public accom-

modations, education, and employment on the

grounds of race, creed, color, religion, sex, or

national origin.

The Civil Rights Act has made our country

better.

I am pleased to report that progress is being

made at the local level as well. Last month, the

Houston City Council approved the Hous-

ton Equal Rights Ordinance, which extends

the right to seek and hold employment, obtain

housing, and enjoy public accommodations

free from discrimination to all individuals in

Houston without regard not just to sex, race,

color, ethnicity, religion, national origin but

also to age, familial status, marital status, mili-

tary status, disability, sexual orientation, gen-

etic information, gender identity or preg-

nancy.

The HERO Ordinance represents another

giant step forward in our nation’s and my city’s

continuing efforts to form a more perfect

union. I believe the anti-discrimination protec-

tions Houstonians now enjoy should be ex-

tended to all persons in our country, which
can be done this year were Congress to pass

the Employee Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

Although more remains to be done to real-
ize the full promise of America to all and to

all, America is closer to realizing that promise.

There have been other changes for the bet-

er.

So there is much reason for joy and opti-

mism when my home city of Houston cele-

brates Houston Pride Week later this month, from

June 20–29.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the

18th largest LGBT community in the nation is

located in the Houston metropolitan area,

which I am privileged to represent. This dy-
namic community is culturally diverse and eco-
nomically and artistically vibrant.

Houston Pride Week has been an annual event for the last 35 years, since 1979, held to promote the individuality of Houston’s ever-
growing LGBT community. The Pride Festival and Parade are at the center of the Celebra-

This legislation is a testament to the efforts of our leaders and...