

the right direction each day. I am grateful to know that someone like Djounedou Titikpina is working in with and for our residents each day, and am proud to call him a fellow public servant.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Djounedou Titikpina for his consistently remarkable dedication to public service.

#### NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH AND NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

#### HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, this November, I am proud to celebrate National Adoption Month and also National Adoption Day, an important time to recognize those wonderful parents who have adopted children in need of a permanent, loving home. It's also a time to remind ourselves of the thousands of children across the country who still remain in foster care, waiting for a family to call their own.

Earlier this year, I was honored to recognize Midland County Probate Judge Dorene Allen as the 2014 Angel in Adoption award recipient from my district. In her 14 years as a judge, she has finalized nearly 700 adoptions, and through this and her prior work she has dedicated her career to serving Michigan's most vulnerable children. There are many incredible advocates like Judge Allen around the country, and I am grateful for their efforts and for the opportunity we have to recognize them today.

Adoption is not something I'm speaking about just today, but something I have focused on throughout my career in private practice as well as my years in Congress. As an attorney before coming to Congress, I worked with parents and children in the foster care system. In Congress, I have been privileged to meet many adoption advocates as well as youth who have benefitted from adoption. Those sorts of experiences provided much of the background for legislation I have helped craft that has contributed to the landmark changes in adoption policy Congress has approved in recent years.

In 1997, my colleagues and I on the Ways and Means Committee crafted the Adoption and Safe Families Act. That legislation streamlined the adoption process to help more children in foster care quickly move into permanent adoptive homes. It also, for the first time, offered incentives to states to safely increase the number of children adopted from foster care.

It worked. In the decade following that legislation, the number of U.S. children adopted from foster care increased by 71 percent. In the years since, adoptions have continued to remain higher even as the foster care caseload started to decline. Overall, almost 300,000 children have been adopted as a result of the increase in adoptions starting in 1997. One study estimated the federal government saved \$1 billion over eight years by ensuring children were adopted instead of remaining in foster care.

In 2001, I worked with my colleagues to pass the historic 2001 tax relief package that expanded the adoption tax credit to \$10,000,

easing the financial burden of adopting a child. In 2012, we made the adoption tax credit permanent.

In 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law my legislation, the Adoption Promotion Act, to create new financial incentives for states that increase adoptions of older children from foster care.

In 2008 as part of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, my proposal to provide equitable access to foster care and adoption services for Indian children in tribal areas became law. This allowed tribal governments to receive funding to administer adoption and foster care programs directly.

And just this year—after many months of hearings, public comment, and bipartisan work between the House and Senate—the President signed into law the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. This law is designed to reduce child sex trafficking as well as increase adoptions, including among the hardest-to-place children.

Together, these efforts have resulted in more children living in loving, adoptive families. I am grateful for the support I have received from my colleagues in these efforts during my time in Congress, and I am grateful that today we can recognize and honor the most important people in this process—the parents who adopt children, the children who have been adopted, and those children still searching for a loving family.

Children in foster care deserve a place to call home, not for a few months or years, but for good. We have already seen great progress in increasing adoptions in recent years, and I hope that we will continue to see progress in the years ahead.

#### HONORING COLONEL ROY PLUMMER

#### HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor one of Columbus, Georgia's finest leaders: Colonel Roy Plummer. Colonel Roy Plummer is retiring as a Director of Army Instruction for the Muscogee County School District JROTC where he is responsible for eight high school JROTC programs and four other county JROTC programs. From 1998 to the present he has dedicated his efforts toward creating a formidable district-level JROTC program which has grown from 400 cadets early in his tenure to a current operating enrollment of 1200 cadets. His partnership with the high school principals in moving JROTC forward in terms of relevancy and as an enhancer to each high school's vision has been extremely successful. Under Colonel Plummer's mentorship, the Muscogee County School District JROTC has earned GHSA State Rifle Championships, State-level awards in drill team and raider competitions, and honorable recognition in the annual JROTC Academic Bowl.

Colonel Plummer is the Senior Pastor, Founder and CEO of Faith Tabernacle Community Church in Columbus since its inception in October 1994. He had finished his Active Duty Army career as the Chief of Chaplains of

Fort Benning, Georgia prior to his retirement. He also currently serves as the Chaplain for Rotary International District 6900, Columbus, Georgia. He has served on numerous Boards as both a chairman and as a member: St. Francis Hospital Foundation, Columbus Hospice, United Way, Boy Scouts of America and the Columbus Chamber of Commerce are but a few.

Colonel Plummer served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling Graduate Studies at Columbus State University. He has earned a baccalaureate in Biblical Literature, Masters of Arts in Human Relations & Group Process and Guidance & Counseling, a Masters of Divinity in Pastoral Care, and a Doctorate in Divinity. This solid educational background and his benevolence inspired Colonel Plummer to create the Plummer Home for homeless and disenfranchised military veterans.

A native of May Penn, Clarendon Parrish, Jamaica, Colonel Roy Plummer is a leader, pastor and friend to many; and the father to four daughters and seven grandchildren. He will share with you that "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" To Roy Plummer and the endless contributions he has made to JROTC, the Muscogee County School District, and the Columbus community, we say "Thanks a Million!"

#### HONORING GEORGE ALLEN ORTIZ

#### HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Albuquerque resident George Allen Ortiz for his honorable military service in the United States Marine Corps.

George Allen Ortiz, affectionately known as "Al", was born in the northern New Mexico town of Raton. At the ripe age of 17, Al began his service in the Vietnam War. He would honorably serve his country from February 28, 1964 to February 16, 1970 in the First Marine Division at battles that ensued in the South Vietnam city of Da Nang.

I had the pleasure of personally meeting with Al on Veteran's Day to thank him for his dedicated service to the United States of America. In that wonderful moment I could sense Al's burning pride and fervent patriotism. It reminded me of the countless individuals, throughout history, who fought tirelessly to preserve the guiding principles and enduring freedoms of our country. Al's commitment to the preservation of these pursuits and our country's continued success is unwavering.

Al was recently diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a result of the risks that American soldiers face when they step onto the battlefield. He has the wonderful support of Cathy, his wife of 45 years, daughter Tamra and six grandchildren who love him dearly. Like a true soldier, he is always thinking about the young Americans who are currently making sacrifices to defend the United States. At age 65, Al still talks about his desire to travel overseas to help our brave men and women as they courageously engage in combat.

It is heroes like Al who make our country great. He is a man of great integrity, revered