

priority of U.S. foreign policy. But unfortunately, we often hear from religious groups globally and from NGOs working on the issue that this Administration has sidelined the promotion of religious freedom.

This criticism does not discount the work done by our men and women at the State Department and the efforts of Ambassador Saperstein himself. They do important and substantive work, but it seems too often that the issue is marginalized and isolated from issues of national security or economic development—even though we know from academic research that countries with the highest levels of religious freedom experience more prosperity and less terrorism.

Religious persecution has catastrophic consequences for religious communities and for individual victims. But it also undermines the national security of the United States. Without religious freedom, aspiring democracies will continue to face instability. Sustained economic growth will be more difficult to achieve. Obstructions will remain to the advancement of the rights of women and girls. And, perhaps most urgent of all, religious terrorism will continue to be nourished and exported.

The global religious freedom crisis will not disappear anytime soon. According to the non-partisan Pew Research Center, 75% of the world's populations live in countries where severe religious persecution occurs regularly.

It has been almost 17 years since the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. Religious freedom diplomacy has developed under three administrations of both parties. Unfortunately, the grim global realities demonstrate that our nation has had little effect on the rise of persecution and the decline of religious freedom.

It is worth asking why.

It is worth asking not only what the State Department is doing, but what can be done better? Are new tools or new ideas needed to help U.S. religious freedom diplomacy address one of the great crises of the 21st century? Does the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 need to be upgraded to reflect 21st century realities?

That is why I introduced the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2015 (H.R. 1150). This legislation, named after the author of the original IRFA Act, my good friend former Congressman Frank Wolf, would, among other things, strengthen the role of the Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom and the IRF office at State and give more tools to the Administration to address the crisis we face. The bill is roundly endorsed and supported by a broad, diverse array of religious freedom, civil society and diaspora organizations. They acknowledge what too many policymakers and administrations, Republican and Democrat alike, have been unable to appreciate—America's first freedom ought to be infused, at every possible level, into our foreign policy.

Upgrading and strengthening U.S. international religious freedom policy—and further integrating it into U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy—will send the clear message that the U.S. will fight for the inherent dignity of every human being and against the global problem of persecution, religious extremism, and terrorism. In so doing, we can advance the best of our values while protecting vital national interests.

## HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN M. FAMULARO

### HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 27, 2015*

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of a very special man, John M. Famularo of Lexington, Kentucky. Famularo spent most of his life in the legal profession and over the years earned a stellar reputation among his fellow attorneys and all that knew him.

Famularo was raised in Mt. Olivet, Kentucky. He came from a family of legal minds, with his father serving as county attorney, district judge, and circuit judge and his brother serving as U.S. Attorney. Famularo graduated from Loyola University and the University of Kentucky College of Law. Two years after graduation from law school, he successfully argued a boundary dispute case before the U.S. Supreme Court. He began serving as an assistant commonwealth attorney for Fayette County in the 1970s. Much of his career was spent as a partner with the Stites and Harbison law firm in Lexington, where his practice focused on product liability, class-action defense, and medical malpractice defense. He also served as Chief Judge of the 22nd Judicial District in Fayette County. Famularo was well respected for his great legal mind.

Mr. Famularo was special to me personally. As a young lawyer, he was my first mentor. Many attorneys, including me, owe our success to the selfless interest he took in our professional development. He was a great lawyer, a fierce advocate for his clients, a dedicated officer of the court, and the best litigator I have ever seen.

Mr. Famularo became a regent and state chairman of the American College of Trial Lawyers, served on the board of governors of the Kentucky Bar Association, and was inducted into the University of Kentucky College of Law Hall of Fame. He passed away on October 23, 2015. He is survived by his wife Karen, three children, and three grandchildren. The legal community and all those associated with John M. Famularo mourn his passing and honor his legacy.

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS

### HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 27, 2015*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 25th Anniversary of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. Since 1990, the initiative has played a critical role in advocating for and advancing policies that have helped our community grow.

While our work is not done, as we conclude Hispanic Heritage Month, it is important for us to celebrate our progress. Our nation's high school graduation rate is the highest in history, and the Latino dropout rate is half of what it was in 2000.

More importantly, however, we must recognize the work that remains and those committed to doing it. Earlier this year, the Department of Education issued a national call for commitments to action for Hispanics in education. The initiative aimed to encourage private, public and nonprofit investments to create and/or expand high quality educational services. The results were astounding; 150 Commitments to Action with a collective investment of over \$335 million.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the commitment of an organization in my district, the Mariachi Music Education Initiative, who has committed nearly \$900,000 over three years for music education.

It's commitments like this, and those of the other 149 organizations that will help our community prosper. Together, through the work and contributions of public, private and nonprofit organizations, we will continue working to close the achievement gap, and ensure every child in America has the tools and opportunity they need to succeed.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MARK TAKAI

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 27, 2015*

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 26, 2015, I was absent from the House to attend to a personal health matter. Due to my absence, I am not recorded on any legislative measures for the day. I would like to reflect how I would have voted had I been present for legislative business.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on Roll Call 569, providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 597) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

## BOKO HARAM AND THE CHIBOK SCHOOLGIRLS

### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 27, 2015*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the world was shocked as 276 schoolgirls from the northeastern Nigerian town of Chibok were kidnapped by the Islamic militant group Boko Haram. In the days following this event, we learned that the military had four hours' warning of the attack, but failed to mobilize sufficient forces to fight off the attackers, who arrived at this predominantly Christian town in a convoy of vehicles. A military redeployment to find the girls two weeks later resulted in the massacre of at least 300 residents of the town of Gamboru Ngala.

Since that time, the previous Nigerian Government made many announcements about freeing the kidnapped girls, none of which proved to be accurate. Hope had been raised last October by a government announcement of a cease-fire and release of the girls only to be dashed by increasing Boko Haram attacks and the continued captivity of the Chibok girls. In fact, Boko Haram kidnapped more girls in northeastern Nigeria, especially Christian girls.