

TRIBUTE TO GORDON HENNICK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Gordon Hennick on the occasion of his 100th birthday on March 30, 2016.

Our world has changed a great deal during the course of Gordon's life. Since his birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Gordon has lived through seventeen United States Presidents and twenty-four Governors of Iowa. In his lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Gordon in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish him a very happy 100th birthday. I invite my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Gordon on reaching this incredible milestone and wishing him even more health and happiness in the years to come.

HOSTILITIES BETWEEN
AZERBAIJAN AND ARMENIA

HON. RYAN K. ZINKE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 18, 2016

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my deepest concern over the recent surge in hostilities along the Line of Contact between Armenia and Azerbaijan which needlessly claimed dozens of lives on both sides.

These skirmishes come just days after a successful visit by Azerbaijani President Aliyev with Vice President BIDEN and Secretary Kerry. Azerbaijan has been a staunch ally to the United States. It is critical to regional stability and global security that the recent hostilities are deescalated.

It is no secret that Russia does not support the Southern Gas Corridor Project. This pipeline has been championed by Azerbaijan and would provide critical energy security for America's friends and allies in Europe. Accordingly this latest upsurge in fighting is another sign of Moscow's meddling in the affairs of states along its borders. As we have seen in Eastern Ukraine and Georgia, Russia continues to exploit separatist movements along its periphery to pressure our friends and allies in the region. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that Armenia, Russia's key regional ally, has been used as a proxy to intimidate our partners, including Azerbaijan and Georgia.

These latest hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia remind us of the urgency to find a peaceful solution to the protracted conflict. I urge the Administration to step up its efforts towards a peaceful solution and work with both sides to stabilize the region. Meanwhile, in the face of increasing Russian interference and aggression against its neighbors, the United States must remain steadfast in its support of friends like Azerbaijan.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR. SEBASTIAN LUJAN "BEN" BENAVIDEZ

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 18, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Sebastian Lujan "Ben" Benavidez, a longtime Fresno civil rights leader, who passed away on April 4, 2016, at the age of 69. Mr. Benavidez will undoubtedly be remembered by the legacy he created through serving the community as a positive role model to all of those he encountered.

Born on November 4, 1946 in Miami, Arizona, Mr. Benavidez was the son of Arizona copper miners. He moved to Fresno, California in 1962. He graduated from Washington Union High School, and continued on to attend Fresno City College. After college Ben worked for Parlier Unified School District. Mr. Benavidez is appreciated by many individuals throughout California, but he is especially treasured in the San Joaquin Valley, where he worked tirelessly to improve civil and economic rights for individuals throughout the region.

Mr. Benavidez was a leader and spent decades advocating and working to improve the lives of immigrant families in the rural communities of the San Joaquin Valley and California. He became actively involved in the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), serving as President for 13 years. As President of MAPA, Mr. Benavidez fought to expand opportunities in education, and led an effort to increase minority participation in local government. In the 1980s and early 1990s, he led boycotts and walkouts that helped more Latinos win city and school board positions. His efforts to expand opportunities for minorities in education decisions led him to take on Dinuba, and Kings Canyon Unified School districts in a battle to eliminate at-large elections, to ensure that school boards were reflective of the communities they served.

Mr. Benavidez's unrelenting pursuit for social justice made him known to be fearless, and he demanded fairness. He fought for equality and improved educational opportunities for immigrant, migrant and minority children. He educated parents about their civil rights and their enormous political potential. Mr. Benavidez's contributions to his community, his philanthropic endeavors, and his work to expand small minority owned businesses led him to be honored by Parlier Unified School District with an elementary school named after him. In 2007, The Fresno Bee recognized Mr. Benavidez with the Latino Legends of the 20th Century Award, and in 2011, Mr. Benavidez was honored for his civil rights work, in advocating for minority civil and economic rights by the Greenlining Institute.

Without question, Mr. Benavidez's integrity, honor and long-lasting involvement in the Central Valley made him a reputable man. He was well known, beloved, and shown enormous appreciation by anyone who had the pleasure of calling him a friend. Mr. Benavidez leaves behind his loving family, including his wife of 49 years, Gloria, their two sons and two daughters, their respective spouses, twelve grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It is my honor to join his family in celebrating the life

of this amazing man, who will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to honor the life of Mr. Ben Benavidez. He will be remembered for his contributions and service to our country.

TRIBUTE TO DAN MEHMEN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 18, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Dan Mehmen of Atlantic, Iowa, for being recognized as the Ambassador of the Year by the Atlantic Area Chamber of Commerce.

Dan is new to the Atlantic area, stepping into the community in 2015. To be a friendly neighbor and community leader, Dan has taken an active role in the Atlantic Area Chamber of Commerce. As an Ambassador for the organization, he visits local businesses to welcome them to the community, attend grand opening ribbon cuttings, and shares information beneficial to a new or local business. In presenting the award, his peers recognized his faithful attendance at Chamber-related events throughout the year, while showing enthusiastic support for area businesses and his fellow Ambassadors.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Dan for earning this award and for taking an active role in his community. I am proud to represent him in the United States Congress I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Dan and in wishing him nothing but continued success.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 18, 2016

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Wednesday, April 13, 2016, has been designated "Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy." I am pleased to join my colleagues in recognizing the unique contributions to our civilization from those of Greece and of Greek American descent.

Democracy was first born in Greece over 2,000 years ago, based on the fundamental principle of consensual government self-determined by free citizens. The ideas forged in ancient Greece by brilliant minds of the day have such clarity and force that 2,000 years later they still hold more power than a host of armed weapons.

The priceless ideas of democracy and equality born in ancient Greece have strongly shaped the American national identity, which became a beacon of freedom and dignity to individuals. They continue to give hope and inspiration to the millions around the world who yearn to live in a free society like ours. Greece set the example for us and we, in turn have set the example for countless others.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that the Congress has set aside this national day of celebration again in 2016. Each year, it seems, we