

Last year, I had the privilege of nominating 20 high school seniors for admission to one or more academies. Half of the young men and women that I nominated received admission to at least one service academy.

Calling each nominee in my district, as I am doing here, to tell them that they have been selected to these prestigious institutions was one of the most special moments of my freshman year in Congress. I hope to make many more phone calls this year. This is a picture of me calling Drew Polczynski last year to tell him he had been accepted to West Point.

If you are highly motivated, looking for a challenge in your life, and want to serve your country, I hope you will consider attending a U.S. Service Academy.

I will be hosting information sessions throughout my district this year. These sessions are a great opportunity for students to explore the possibility of attending one of several prominent academic institutions and meet with admissions representatives. I hope students and their family will attend these events throughout the Second Congressional District.

If you are interested in a congressional nomination, please contact my office in Charleston at (304) 925-5964, or my office in Martinsburg at (304) 264-8810, and ask for the individual who oversees academy applications.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I met with members of the Syrian community in Charleston, West Virginia, to discuss ways that the Federal Government can help the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria. This is us meeting.

In particular, we discussed H.R. 5732, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2016. The bill would hold Syrian human rights abusers accountable for their crimes. The bill would impose sanctions on individuals who do business with dictator al-Assad's brutal regime and would require the President to publish a list of people who are complicit in the grave human rights violations that have occurred and continue to unfold in Syria.

Despite promises and agreements to the contrary, chemical weapons are still being used regularly by the Assad regime in Syria. We cannot look the other way while innocent children are murdered.

I am a proud cosponsor of this critical bill, and I thank my colleagues, Congressman ELIOT ENGEL and Chairman ED ROYCE, for introducing it. I encourage the leadership here in the House to bring the bill to the floor for a vote immediately.

The innocent Syrian people have suffered enough. The current civil war has resulted in 4 million refugees and nearly 500,000 killed.

My mother fled Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba after being unjustly thrown in jail by Fidel Castro's tyrannical Communist regime. We must pro-

tect persecuted individuals who have no one to stand up for them.

ENSURING SAFETY, QUALITY, AND RELIABILITY FOR OUR VETERANS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3471, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act, a bill I am proud to cosponsor. This legislation would set minimum standards for any individual or company installing or selling mobility products to veterans through a Department of Veterans Affairs equipment program.

These products are used by disabled veterans to increase their mobility and their overall quality of life, but the VA does not currently require vendors who make or repair the products to meet a certain level of certification. Standards in this legislation would help guarantee safety, quality, and reliability.

It is critical that our veterans who have given so much for our country have the best available equipment to accommodate any physical disability. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

SUPPLYING STUDENTS WITH SKILLS BUSINESSES NEED

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, a bill I am proud to cosponsor; and I wish to recognize my colleague from Pennsylvania, G.T. Thompson, for his work on that bill.

This bipartisan legislation would provide State and local educators with greater control and flexibility with respect to career and technical education programs; and it takes an important step in closing the skills gap faced by American employers and manufacturers.

In order to succeed in the modern workforce, students need to emerge with the skills that State and local businesses need. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act does just that, encouraging greater student involvement in work-based learning and, in the classroom, emphasizing the development of employability skills and the importance of attaining credentials.

As co-chair of the 21st Century Skills Caucus, I have been working on legislation with similar goals, and I am very proud to see provisions I have advocated for included in this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HALTING TAX INCREASES

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3590, the Halt Tax Increases on the Middle Class and Seniors Act. This legislation would put taxpayers' hard-

earned dollars back into their own pockets. It would lower the required percentage of income that must be spent to qualify for a tax deduction for medical costs.

Americans should be able to deduct high-cost medical expenses, and this legislation would reduce the required percentage from 10 percent to 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill to provide middle class families and seniors with deserved tax relief, as they have already had to spend a significant amount of their income on these expenses.

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RICHLAND BOROUGH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Richland Borough, Lebanon County, of my district, on 110 years of incorporation.

On September 17, 1906, Richland became its own municipality, breaking from Millcreek Township, gaining its name from the fertile soil in the area.

Richland is home to the inventor of the air pump used by Henry Ford on the Model T and will celebrate this and the rest of its impressive history this weekend.

I wish to also recognize the Lebanon Daily News for a great article on the history of Richland Borough. Gary Althaus of the Richland Heritage Society and many others have been organizing a series of events that will take place this upcoming Saturday.

A little bit more brief history: August 9, 1906, the citizens of Richland held a public meeting on the subject of the advantages of a borough. On August 12, the plan was put in circulation, and by 11 p.m., it had 50 signatures. Then on August 16, 1906, Mr. Holstein took the petition to the county courthouse and presented it before the court, and on September 17, the presiding judge granted the charter. On February 25, 1907, the first Richland Borough Council meeting was organized at the Union House, which then became the place of many meetings, including borough council meetings thereafter.

Congratulations to Richland Borough and all its residents. I am very proud to represent you in the United States Congress.

CONGRATULATING DR. BILL HOGARTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Bill Hogarth, a former director of our Nation's National Marine Fisheries Services. Dr. Hogarth recently retired as director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography based at the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg. Not only do I recognize Dr. Hogarth on his retirement, but also on two honors that he recently received.

First, the American Fisheries Society last month honored Dean Hogarth—as he is known to so many—with the Carl R. Sullivan Fishery Conservation Award, one of our Nation's premier awards in fisheries sciences. The award recognizes Dean Hogarth's long career and leadership in preserving some of the world's most threatened marine species. It recognizes his passionate advocacy for environmental protections and his role in leading Florida's scientific response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

The second honor for Dean Hogarth in early September was bestowed upon him by the University of South Florida's Board of Trustees when it voted to name its newest research vessel in his namesake to recognize Dean Hogarth's passionate pursuit of funding for a new boat to replace the university system's more than 40-year-old research vessel.

For those of my colleagues who have had the opportunity to work with and meet Dean Hogarth over his long career, you know of his humble nature, his laugh, and, most notably, his deep southern drawl. You also know of his spirited passion for all issues related to fisheries and the oceans.

Dean Hogarth's first job was as a biologist and manager of ecological programs for Carolina Power & Light, and he later served as director of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

His national and international stature grew in 1994, when he joined the National Marine Fisheries Service where he rose from a regional leader to be appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the agency's director from 2001 to 2007. Recognizing his leadership on national and international fisheries issues at a most critical juncture for the commercial and recreational fishing industries, President Bush appointed Dean Hogarth to represent our Nation as U.S. Commissioner and Chairman of both the International Whaling Commission and the International Commission for Conservation of the Atlantic.

During his tenure as director of NMFS, Dr. Hogarth worked with this Congress to update Federal fisheries laws to rebuild U.S. fisheries and set the recreational and commercial fishing industries on a new and sustainable course. In 2007, Dr. Hogarth retired from Federal service and joined the University of South Florida as interim dean, and then dean of the College of Marine Science in St. Petersburg.

Recognizing his leadership skills, Dr. Hogarth was then appointed in January 2011 as director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography, a consortium of more than 30 scientific and educational institutions across Florida. The USF president then called upon Dean Hogarth's leadership skills once again and asked him to assume a dual role, adding to his responsibilities the job of regional chancellor of USF-St. Petersburg from August 2012 to June 2013.

USF and the Florida Institute of Oceanography made national and inter-

national headlines following the 2010 explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. Dr. Hogarth led a scientific response that focused on the immediate aftermath of the spill, including the path of the oil plume both above the water and in the Gulf's deepest reaches and currents. It focused also on the impact of the spill on fisheries and other wildlife and the response of the research community in the five-State region to address short- and long-term environmental concerns.

One of his final acts as director of the Institute of Oceanography before his official retirement on July 31 was to work with the Florida State legislature, our Governor, the university, and the city of St. Petersburg to secure funding to replace the 40-year-old Research Vessel Bellows. This ship, managed by the Institute of Oceanography, is a great resource to faculty and students alike, giving them invaluable assets to the Gulf of Mexico and other research waterways in pursuit of their studies. The new ship will now be named rightfully the RV William T. Hogarth and will continue to provide a path to sea for thousands of Florida students and educators.

Dean Hogarth will always be known to me as an educator. It is personal to me because he serves as a key advisory on fisheries issues that are so critical to our State and to our community. I will always call him Dean, as will so many others, and we look forward to his continued counsel in retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that my colleagues will join me in thanking a most special person who has dedicated much of his career to one of the great interests of our Nation: our fisheries, our marine sciences, and our oceans. Dr. Hogarth is a national champion of our Nation's critical assets, our oceans. It is an honor for me to recognize him today, and I ask my colleagues to do the same. We wish him very well in retirement and we thank him for his service.

HURRICANE IKE ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today marks 8 years since Hurricane Ike made landfall over Galveston, Texas. This Category 4 storm ripped through communities in the city of Galveston and Galveston County, making its way inland through the Houston region. The storm caused over 100 fatalities, washed away homes, flooded communities, and shut down much of the region's energy production. In total, this hurricane cost \$37.5 billion nationwide, making it the third costliest hurricane in United States history. Even though Hurricane Ike caused extensive damage, we know it could have been much worse.

The effects of another major hurricane on the Houston region and our Nation would absolutely be devastating.

Over 6 million people call this area home, and many of them work in critical economic sectors like health care and energy refining. The impact would be felt in every congressional district across the country. For example, according to reports published immediately after Hurricane Ike made landfall, gas prices spiked between 30 and 60 cents per gallon across many States due to the disruption in energy production in the Houston region.

We do not know, Mr. Speaker, when the next big storm will hit our shores, which is why it is of paramount importance for Congress, the Federal Government, and our State to prioritize funding for coastal protection along the Texas coast. Progress on a comprehensive Federal evaluation of our coastal vulnerabilities is long overdue. I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, that the Texas General Land Office and the Army Corps of Engineers are moving forward in partnership on the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Study. Once completed, this study will make the case for coastal infrastructure projects that would qualify for Federal dollars and would protect our vulnerable coastal communities, our energy infrastructure, maritime industries, and, most importantly, major population centers.

I am doing everything I can, Mr. Speaker, to make sure a Federal study of our coast is completed expeditiously. Along with Senator CORNYN, I have introduced the COAST Act, which is actually the Corps' Obligation to Assist in Safeguarding Texas Act. If enacted, this legislation would require the Army Corps to take into consideration existing studies and data already available to help expedite the Federal Government's work. This legislation would also immediately authorize any projects should they be justified.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work with all relevant Federal, State, and local leaders to expedite Federal work to protect the Texas Gulf Coast from dangerous storms. This is a critical Federal interest and should be a national priority.

Mr. Speaker, you know that is right.

COMBATING DRUG EPIDEMIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this summer, I was proud to vote in favor of a package of bills intended to crack down on the epidemic of heroin use and opioid abuse across our Nation. I was even happier to see that legislation pass the House and Senate with broad bipartisan support before being signed into law by the President.

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act will help make grant funding available to State and local governments, create a task force to review physician prescribing guidelines