

CELEBRATING DOUBLE TEN DAY

HON. BLAKE FARENTHOLD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, Monday, October 10 is Taiwan's National Day—also known as Double Ten Day. Since this body will not be in session that day, I would like to offer my early best wishes to the people of Taiwan.

Taiwan is a close trade partner and ally of the US in the Asia-Pacific region. A fine example of the trade relationship between Taiwan and the U.S. is Formosa Plastics Corporation, a Taiwanese company heavily invested in the district I represent. They are a major employer in the region and are actively involved in the community.

Last year, Eva Air, one of the biggest Taiwanese airlines, launched the direct flight route between Houston, Texas and Taipei, Taiwan, and will soon be offering direct flights between Dallas/Ft. Worth and Taipei. These flights shore up the business and cultural ties between Taiwan, Texas and the entire U.S.

I am glad to see closer trade ties between Taiwan and the US. It is my belief Taiwan should be included in the International Civil Aviation Organization (I-C-A-O), which works to secure the civil aviation throughout the world. The ICAO's 39th Triennial Assembly will meet in Montreal on September 27. I hope that Taiwan will be invited to attend the Assembly as it was three years ago.

Again, I wish the people of Taiwan a Happy Double Ten Day, and I look forward to working closely with Taiwanese people to further enhance our bilateral relations.

RECOGNIZING ODESSA COLLEGE'S
DESIGN FOR COMPLETION PRO-
GRAM**HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Odessa College for being named a Finalist in Excellence in Education. This honor was bestowed on Odessa College for their work in raising retention rates through their Design for Completion program.

Starting in 2011, Odessa College created a framework to provide meaningful connections and engagements between their students and faculty. Design for Completion is focused on the student and their success in the classroom and beyond. This initiative places students on a distinct and coherent pathway that provides the necessary support and resources vital to their collegiate careers.

Since implementing Design for Completion, retention and student success rates have dramatically increased across campus, especially among Hispanic students. Through this program, Odessa College has instilled confidence in their students by showing them that they can accomplish any goal that they set out to conquer. Odessa College hopes that this program serves as a model that other higher education institutions can use to help other students succeed in their academic studies.

A strong education system contributes greatly to the success and growth of our country, and is the key to not only our individual achievement, but also to our competitiveness as a nation. Programs like Design for Completion helps our nation achieve these goals and reach our fullest potential. I am honored to have the opportunity to represent Odessa College and wish them continued success.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF BELLEVUE COL-
LEGE**HON. SUZAN K. DELBENE**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Bellevue College and its great work toward educating students in my home state of Washington.

Bellevue College was founded in 1966 as a small community college with fewer than 500 students. Fifty years later, it has grown into two campuses with an enrollment of nearly 33,000 students each year, becoming Washington's largest community college.

Throughout its tremendous growth, Bellevue College has remained committed to providing all students with access to affordable, quality higher education.

Today, the institution's students are able to take advantage of nearly 100 different professional and technical programs or pursue one of the 10 bachelor degrees offered by the college.

I would like to thank all of the school's faculty, staff and administrators for their hard work and commitment to helping their students and the college succeed.

Bellevue College has done a remarkable job preparing its students for the future, and I look forward to seeing what the next 50 years hold. Happy anniversary to the entire Bellevue College community.

ERITREA: A NEGLECTED
REGIONAL THREAT**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, in 1993, the citizens of Eritrea, then a province of Ethiopia, voted to become an independent nation. Ethiopia had annexed Eritrea in 1962, and its citizens no doubt believed they were well on their way to controlling their destiny. Unfortunately, their hopes would soon be dashed. Elections have been repeatedly postponed, and opposition political parties are no longer able to organize.

Those same initial hopes for democracy and good government in Eritrea also were held by the international community. In a March 1997 report on the U.S. Agency for International Development program in Eritrea, the American aid agency had high praise for its collaboration with the Eritrean government: "Over the past year, the young state of Eritrea continued its exciting and pace-setting experiment in nation-

building, and, similarly, USAID/Eritrea established itself as Eritrea's leading development partner."

Within a few years, the Government of Eritrea ended its relationship with USAID, but this decision was originally taken as a sign that Eritrea was ready to become an example to the rest of the developing world by managing its own humanitarian needs. Yet Eritrea's government instead merely became less open, and when an East African drought occurred in 2011, we knew very little about how Eritreans were faring. Today, we know that two-thirds of Eritreans live on subsistence agriculture, which has had poor yields due to recurring droughts and low productivity.

What we also know is that Eritrea's citizens are living under a regime that does not honor their human rights. In June of this year, the UN Human Rights Council released a report that accused the Government of Eritrea with a variety of violations, including extrajudicial executions, torture, indefinitely prolonged national service and forced labor, and sexual harassment, rape and sexual servitude by state officials.

In its Trafficking in Persons Report from June 2016, the State Department listed Eritrea as "Tier 3" and stated, "Eritrea is a source country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor . . . the government did not investigate, prosecute, or convict trafficking offenders during the reporting year . . . the government demonstrated negligible efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims . . . the government maintained minimal efforts to prevent trafficking."

In their most recent International Religious Freedom Report, the State Department listed Eritrea as a Country of Particular Concern. Moreover, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom lists Eritrea as a Tier 1 Country of Particular Concern for its egregious religious freedom violations. Eritrea's government interferes with the internal affairs of registered religious groups and represses the religious liberty of those faith groups it refuses to register, such as Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims who do not follow the government-appointed head of the Islamic community. Furthermore, the government has a record of arbitrary arrests of believers and their leaders and reportedly tortures those in prolonged detention.

As a result of the authoritarian government's actions, Eritrea is considered one of the world's fastest emptying nations, with about half a million of the country's citizens having left their homes for often dangerous paths to freedom. An estimated 5,000 Eritreans leave their country each month.

In a July 9, 2015, hearing by our subcommittee on African refugees, John Stauffer, President of the America Team for Displaced Eritreans, told us that Eritrean Government officials operated freely in eastern Sudan, arresting and bringing back to Eritrea those they considered high-value targets among refugees, such as government officials or church leaders. He also testified that refugees moving east may be kidnapped and extorted locally for a few thousand dollars, or taken off to Egypt or Libya where they are abused. That abuse often included organ harvesting.

In the past year, the world has witnessed a flood of Eritrean refugees risking their lives on