

have bright futures. They served as tour guides, interacted with constituents, and both learned a great deal about our nation's legislative process. I was glad to be able to offer this educational opportunity, and look forward to seeing them build their careers in public service.

Rob plans to continue pursuing his degree at the end of his internship, and I have recently hired Monica as a Staff Assistant in my D.C. office. I wish them both the best as they pursue their respective career paths. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Rob Austrian and Monica Mosimann for their service the last several months to the people of Colorado's 4th district.

HONORING CITY OF REFUGE UCC

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 5, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the City of Refuge UCC upon its 25th anniversary for its legacy of promoting community building, inclusion, and faith in the Bay Area.

First established in San Francisco, the City of Refuge was founded in 1991 by a group of primarily gay and lesbian Christians with the goal of establishing a church that did not adhere to the exclusion of people based on gender or sexual orientation. Three years later in 1994, the City of Refuge joined the United Church of Christ (UCC) and became incorporated with over 5,000 churches worldwide working to uphold the denomination's commitment to social justice.

Founder and Senior Pastor Reverend Dr. Yvette A. Flunder has been nationally recognized for her work to promote the inclusion of gay and lesbian parishioners and to minister to their specific needs. In response to the AIDS epidemic, Rev. Dr. Flunder established the Ark of Refuge, a non-profit organization that provided direct services to homeless and low-income individuals, and also created the Hazard-Ashley House and Walker House in Oakland as a means to provide housing services, education, and training for people affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2000, she created the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, a network of more than 100 primarily African American churches around the world that work to promote "radical inclusivity", whereby the ministry is open to all without prejudice or discrimination.

In 2013 the City of Refuge UCC relocated to Oakland. Through the hard work and dedication of the ministry, staff, and congregation, community members and in particular women, immigrants, and those who identify as LGBTQ, have found a safe space for self-expression, belonging, and religious participation. Through the Church's various ministries, this community provides support for those needing help addressing substance abuse, homelessness, HIV/AIDS treatment, and environmental justice.

On behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I would like to congratulate the City of Refuge UCC on this important milestone, and thank the community for the many valuable services that they provide to those in need. I wish the congregation continued success in upholding its commitment to social justice and

expanding the radical inclusivity that has come to be the City of Refuge's hallmark.

RECOGNIZING ROMANIA'S GREAT UNION DAY

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 5, 2016

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, as the co-Chairman of the Congressional Romania Caucus and as the former President of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, I congratulate Romania on its Great Union Day. Romania is celebrating the anniversary of its unification on December 1, 1918.

Romania is a loyal U.S. and NATO ally. Romania and the United States work closely together to confront a host of global challenges, including through our joint efforts to bolster regional defense, halt nuclear proliferation, and increase energy security. With the signing of the U.S.-Romania Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement in September 2011, Romania established itself as a key strategic partner in NATO's emerging missile defense capabilities effort. The Missile Defense Interceptor site at Deveselu Air Base near the Bulgarian border, which became operational in May 2016, now provides missile defense protection to our allies in Europe and the Middle East.

Tragically, ongoing events in Ukraine are unsettling the region and testing the transatlantic alliance. As you know, Russia seeks to once again destabilize much of Eastern Europe and restore influence over territories lost following the collapse of the Soviet Union. That is why it is critically important for the United States, Romania, and other European allies to continue to work together to strengthen the transatlantic alliance and bolster regional security.

The strategic partnership between the United States and Romania has greatly advanced our common interests in promoting transatlantic and regional security and free market opportunities. Our partnership should continue to foster greater economic and cultural exchanges, trade and investment, and social contacts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in celebrating Romania's Great Union Day.

FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1555, the "Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015."

S. 1555 honors the brave Filipino soldiers who courageously fought for freedom in World War II by awarding the highest honor that this Congress can bestow.

More than 260,000 Filipino veterans, 18,000 of who are still alive today, who for decades

had to fight for benefits and recognition, will now receive the recognition they have earned and deserve.

These Filipino soldiers were instrumental to the United States efforts in the Pacific.

After the invasion of the Philippines by Japanese forces they retired to the Bataan Peninsula and continued to fight valiantly.

Among these brave soldiers is Dominador Soriano, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, who fought as a member of both the Philippine and United States Armies.

He was drafted into the Philippine Army in 1938 and then inducted into the U.S. Army in the Far East on September 1, 1941.

Under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur, Soriano commanded the Echo Company of the 83rd Infantry Regiment, keeping watch on Japanese ships moving through the Tanon Strait.

During the Japanese invasion he was shot and in July of 1944 was captured, beaten and then released, but could barely walk.

Soriano continued working with the resistance until the surrender of the Japanese on August 15, 1945.

Recently, the city of San Antonio honored Soriano and other Filipino veterans with a resolution that recognized their efforts during World War II and supported legislation to award these courageous men the Congressional Gold Medal.

The resolution is the first of its kind by any city in the United States, and I believe that it is time for Congress to follow suit.

These brave Filipino soldiers answered President Franklin D. Roosevelt's call to serve in World War II and they deserve the highest award that we can give, for there is no higher duty than putting one's life on the line for freedom and country.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1555 the "Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIA B. LOVE

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 5, 2016

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following remarks regarding my absence from votes which occurred on December 2, 2016. A member of my immediate family experienced a medical crisis out of state, and I traveled to support him. As a result, I missed votes for the day.

MR. ANTHONY XUEREB

HON. LEE M. ZELDIN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 5, 2016

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a special tribute to Mr. Anthony Xuereb.

Anthony was born in Malta, and he had always yearned to come to the United States to make a better life for himself. He came to this country in 1934 during the Great Depression and struggled mightily to survive the terrible economic and social conditions of the time. He