

roots of the war. The institute says Colombia's agreement addresses root causes more comprehensively than any other negotiated settlement has.

Every weekday, get thought-provoking commentary from Op-Ed columnists, the Times editorial board and contributing writers from around the world.

That is no accident. More than in any previous conflict negotiation, Colombia put victims at the center of the process. Victims' issues were not only on the table; victims themselves were at the table, regularly and often, asserting their rights and concerns. As a result, the agreement stipulates that the worst perpetrators of wartime atrocities—whether guerrillas, paramilitaries, or state actors—must confess their crimes, make reparations and accept sentences that include up to eight years of “restorative justice,” such as removing land mines, that are deemed acceptable to their victims and “effective restrictions on liberty.” Displaced persons must be compensated or returned to their homes and the remains of the disappeared, where possible, identified and returned to loved ones.

To fulfill these and other commitments, the government must create far-reaching programs and policies that will cost billions of dollars and take years to carry out. It must establish a system of transitional justice, a truth commission and investigative and protective units to safeguard the lives of demobilized former combatants and human rights activists.

Colombia will bear the largest burden, but the international community, led by the United States, must continue to help.

The United States has no closer strategic partner in Latin America than Colombia, and our interests in the region are intertwined. Colombian trainers and troops are working today with their American counterparts to help Mexico and Central America's Northern Triangle countries—El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras—combat the drug cartel violence that is fueling refugee flows, largely of unaccompanied minors. If, in turn, Colombia with American assistance can reverse its recent upturn in coca leaf production, it will take pressure off the Northern Triangle's embattled governments and institutions.

Two decades ago, Colombia was nearly overrun by guerrilla armies, paramilitaries and drug cartels. Colombians, at great sacrifice, fought back, strengthened their democratic institutions, and created today's opportunity for peace. Colombian leaders and citizens deserve the greatest share of the credit. But steady, sustained bipartisan American support and assistance for 16 years under Plan Colombia made a crucial difference.

If the peace agreement succeeds, Colombia will emerge as the strongest democracy in Latin America, a political and economic model for the region. As in the past, the United States should help Colombia reach that goal with continuing bipartisan support. Passage of President Obama's request for \$450 million in fiscal 2017 for an economic assistance program called Paz (Peace) Colombia would send the hemisphere, where support for Colombia's peace process is universal, an encouraging signal about American staying power.

In September, at the United Nations General Assembly, Secretary of State John Kerry and his Norwegian counterpart, Borge Brende, secured commitments of \$106 million from a coalition of 25 countries to help Colombia clear its land mines by 2021. President Santos showed the group a pamphlet that teaches Colombian children how to avoid land mines on the way to school.

Mr. Santos said he dreamed of the day when such pamphlets would teach Colombian

students only science, art, mathematics or poetry, because Colombia would be land-mine free. Helping turn that dream into a reality would be a fitting memorial to Yisely Isarama.

HONORING LORI HARJU

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2016

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge and express my deep appreciation to Lori Harju for 25 years of government service the last five dedicated to serving me and the people of Texas' 8th Congressional District.

Lori began her career working for her local Congressman, Guy Vander Jagt of Michigan. She grew up not far from the shores of Lake Michigan, in the town of Kaleva, and misses it to this day. I can't tell you how many times I've seen pictures of Lake Michigan, and of her many nieces and nephews as they have always been displayed in her office and on her screen saver. She brought with her to Washington the upper Midwest values of hard work, common sense, and humility—perfect attributes for working for a Member of Congress.

From Representative Vander Jagt's office, Lori moved on to work for some of this body's most prestigious Members. She worked for Congressman Dave Camp of Michigan, who served as Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee, and for Congressman Phil Crane, another one of the Ways & Means Committee's most powerful and storied Members. Lori then moved to a senior political position in the Administration of George W. Bush, serving as the head of congressional affairs at the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration.

I was fortunate to be able to hire Lori at the end of President Bush's second term. Few people know Congressional procedures or how to get things done in Congress like she does. She originally served as my Legislative Director, and later became my Chief of Staff. When I became Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee a little over a year ago, I asked her to help on the Committee as my Senior Advisor, because of her vast experience working with Ways and Means Committee members. Indeed, Lori has now worked for three senior Members of the Ways & Means Committee, a record few congressional staffers can match.

I have always relied upon Lori's counsel and appreciate her forthrightness and her integrity. Lori has always served with humility and grace. I hope Lori will now have a little more time to spend with her family near the shores of Lake Michigan, but I also hope, as she leaves government service and begins the next phase of her career, that she won't move far and will continue to offer her valuable counsel. I and the rest of this House will miss her.

H.R. 4680, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL ACT

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2016

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the National Park Service Centennial Act. This year, our nation is celebrating the first one hundred years of what filmmaker Ken Burns so accurately labelled “America's best idea”. With this legislation, we are helping to strengthen the National Park Service for its second century of serving visitors and conserving our national treasures.

America's National Parks are the best example of our commitment to preserve and celebrate the natural wonder and cultural heritage of the United States. It is our responsibility to ensure that future generations can have the same chance our families do to experience our national landscapes and history.

The Centennial Act will support that goal by building upon the public-private partnerships created by the extremely successful National Park Service's Centennial Challenge. Federal investments of \$25 million over the past two years have been more than doubled by private investments. These public-private collaborations provide an opportunity to reinvest in our parks and to re-engage with the hundreds of millions of visitors who come to our parks every year. In Minnesota's 4th District, the Centennial Challenge supported a vibrant new visitor center in the heart of St. Paul to connect families to an urban National Park: the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

In addition, the Centennial Act establishes an endowment for the National Park Service. The gifts and donations that go into the endowment will form a base of funding to address future park projects and needs. This endowment fund will protect ancient landscapes and tell the ever evolving story of the American people and our nation. It will help to preserve the unique ecosystem within our oldest parks, like Yellowstone and Yosemite. It will demonstrate the diversity of the American dream at the newly created Stonewall and Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monuments.

For a century, the National Park Service has conserved our natural treasures, preserved our cultural heritage, offered unparalleled opportunities for recreation, and taught young and old alike about the history of our land and our people. This is an impressive legacy, and it is one we must build upon to keep our national parks a part of our national fabric for generations to come.

The National Park Service Centennial Act is an important step forward to protecting that legacy, and I urge all my colleagues to support it.

IN HONOR OF WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2016

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a school in my District which was

recently crowned as state champion in football. The Westfield High School Bulldogs Football team, led by Athletic Director Terri Towle, Head Coach Kyle Simmons and Assistant Coaches Dan Keating, Jon Shields, Mike Giancola, Pete Bendorf, Jose Ardon, Alex Callas, Mike King, Chris Coyer, and Curtis Knight, was one of several teams who won state titles in a variety of sports from Virginia's 10th Congressional District. I am proud of their hard work in achieving this goal. They practiced long hours as a team, and this extraordinary achievement shows how far dedication, hard work, and commitment to teamwork can take a group as they played against some of the best competition in the nation.

This year's state championship was a rematch of the 2015 state championship, where Westfield defeated Oscar Smith High School in quadruple overtime. Oscar Smith jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the first quarter; but West-

field took the lead in the second with touchdowns by Nolan Cockrill and Sean Eckert. They extended their lead to 21-7 in the third after Nathaniel Chung punched in a third touchdown. However, Oscar Smith stormed back in the fourth quarter, scoring two touchdowns and executing a two point conversion with seven seconds left on the clock to send the game to overtime. Oscar Smith struck first with a touchdown pass on the first play. With the game on the line, Westfield answered with a touchdown pass of its own, tying the game at 28 and forcing a second overtime. Westfield had capitalized on having the first possession, with Rehman Johnson throwing his fourth touchdown of the night to Ivory Frimpong. Westfield's defense then rose up, and stopped Oscar Smith's high powered offense on the three yard line and in doing so, secured the Bulldogs second state championship in as many years.

Westfield High School's Football team has made Virginia's 10th Congressional District proud and they have represented us well. Winning a state championship attests to their impressive athletic ability, unselfish mentality, and determination to succeed. I commend them for their tireless dedication to both their school and their teammates, without neither of which this could have been possible. It takes a delicate combination of superior skill and many hours of practice to win a state title. Westfield Football has certainly earned this honor and the lessons learned over the years will valuably serve them as they continue on in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the Westfield Bulldogs for winning the Virginia 6A Football State Championship and representing Virginia's 10th Congressional District with such distinction. I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.