

Americans want and need, and it is what we should be doing.

TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
FOR VETERANS

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a very troubling issue, but also to tell the story of one of my high school classmates who is trying to make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, every day, 22 veterans in the United States take their own lives. At this pace, veterans are committing suicide at a rate of 19 percent higher than the general adult population. We, in Congress, will not turn a blind eye to these servicemembers in need of our support. This issue is a top clinical priority for the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as for this Congress.

In a unanimous vote, the House passed legislation that works for the VA to examine the effectiveness of the Veterans Crisis Line. I am also a proud cosponsor of the Oath of Exit Act written by my close friend and colleague, Congressman BRIAN MAST from Florida. This legislation will require all individuals retiring or separating from the Armed Forces to take a pledge not to harm themselves. But these actions alone are not enough, and more must be done to protect our servicemembers.

To help our veterans with this mental health battle, we are now turning to our four-legged friends. Therapy dogs have a proven success record for helping our veterans tackle the physical and mental challenges that they face in their transitions back to civilian life.

As I stand before the House today, I want to bring awareness to one organization that I am especially proud of, K94Heroes. This nonprofit group provides therapy dogs to our servicemen and -women who are in desperate need of compassion and support. I am overjoyed to see members of the community empowering our veterans and I am honored to say that this organization was founded in my home State, in my hometown, by one of my high school classmates, John "Big Daddy" Lipscomb.

John founded the K94Heroes program after connecting with one of our other classmates, an elementary classmate, who specializes in service dog training for veterans. In 2015, John and his daughter established K94Heroes and raised private funds to mitigate training costs. Together, they work tirelessly to ensure every veteran who deserves a service dog receives one.

We owe it to those who protected us abroad the assurance of protection here at home. With upstanding citizens like John "Big Daddy" Lipscomb and with continued action on the Federal level, we will be able to better protect our veterans who sacrifice so much for this

country. Still, this Congress must make continued efforts toward veteran suicide prevention, and I commend the efforts of organizations such as K94Heroes.

HONORING JOHN YOUNG, CENTRAL  
FLORIDA'S LOCAL HERO

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of an Orlando favorite son, a hero that we lost this past weekend, Astronaut John Young, who was inspirational and legendary to our community and who grew up in College Park in Orlando, Florida. Streets named after him span our district, as well as Congresswomen MURPHY's and DEMINGS' districts in central Florida.

He was described by our local paper as a "country boy who grew up in Orlando, Florida, back when it was mostly farmland." He even got in trouble for smuggling a corned beef sandwich into space on Gemini 3.

He was mostly known for his coolheadedness and calm demeanor as he took numerous trips into space with NASA. Some of the flags and mission patches he flew into space are on display in our Orlando Science Center. In central Florida, we are proud to have the John Young Parkway bear his name. He died on January 5, this past Friday, at his home in Houston.

Mr. YOUNG was NASA's longest-serving astronaut. He was the first person to orbit the Moon by himself and the ninth person to walk on the Moon as well. He was the first person to travel to space six times during NASA's Gemini and Apollo lunar missions, and into the space shuttle programs as well.

John Young commanded the first space shuttle flight mission, an iconic view that so many central Floridians and so many Americans have seen over the years during that program. He was awarded the prestigious Congressional Space Medal of Honor in 1981. He represents the very best of the Orlando area.

Rest in peace, Astronaut John Young.

□ 1030

HONORING ISABEL CASTANO-LUGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Isabel Castano-Lugo, who will turn 112 years young on January 11. Isabel, a supercentenarian, is one of only a handful in the Nation who has lived through some of the brightest times and darkest chapters in our history.

Born in 1906, in Manizales, Colombia, Isabel was one of 13 brothers and sisters. At age 41, Isabel married and had 2 sons, Omar and Danilo Lugo. Because

of the increasing violence in her home country and the kidnapping of her husband, Isabel began a new life with her children in the United States in 1970, and, for 26 years, she resided in my district in beautiful Miami Beach.

Throughout her long and distinguished life, Isabel has never ceased placing the needs of others before her own. Isabel has served as a strong advocate for many important issues and organizations, such as the Jewish Community Center of Miami Beach, and has continued to serve as a voice for the voiceless to this day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this historic birthday with Isabel, who is the oldest living person in the State of Florida.

CONGRATULATING COACH MARK RICHT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mark Richt, head coach of the Miami Hurricanes football team on being named the Walter Camp 2017 Coach of the Year and the ACC Coach of the Year.

In only two seasons at the helm, Coach Richt has created a winning environment at my alma mater, the University of Miami. This season, the Hurricanes won their first ACC Coastal Division title and ended a 7-year losing streak against rival Florida State University.

Coach Richt's success on the field this past year also earned him two notable accolades. He is the first Miami Hurricane's coach to be named ACC Coach of the Year and only the second UM coach to receive the Walter Camp award. Coach Richt is truly a phenomenal leader, and I am confident that he will continue to guide UM's football program to greater victories in the years to come.

Once again, "congratulations," "felicidades," to Coach Richt on your success this last season, and "Go Canes."

CONGRATULATING COACH JIM MORRIS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Jim Morris on celebrating his 25th and final season as head coach of the Miami Hurricanes baseball team. Coach Morris has dedicated his life to college baseball. He has won over 1,500 Division 1 games, the fifth most in the history of the sport.

During his tenure, the University of Miami, my alma mater, qualified for the College World Series more times than any other baseball program throughout the country, and he led the team to two national championships. Coach Morris has also been named National Coach of the Year three times.

Coach Morris' outstanding leadership for the past 25 years has left a positive and lasting impact on the University of Miami. I am confident that this historic legacy will continue to inspire and will continue to shape Hurricane baseball in the years to come.

Once again, "congratulations," "felicidades," to Coach Morris on a long and distinguished career.

"Go Canes."