

Cofield who is celebrating 40 years as pastor of Whitfield Baptist Church.

Pastor Cofield grew up in Decatur, Georgia, and attended Georgia State University, graduating with a degree in Business Administration.

He was later ordained to preach at Wesley Hills Baptist Church in Decatur, where he was an active member for 22 years.

Then after serving for several years at Gospel Baptist Temple in Claxton, Georgia, he moved with his wife Connie and their four children to Dalton in 1978 to establish Whitfield Baptist Church.

Pastor Cofield's first service at Whitfield Baptist Church was held on February 4, 1978, with 42 attending the service and 29 children attending the Sunday school.

A few short months later, Whitfield Baptist had more than 200 people attending morning service and more than 170 attending Sunday school.

Since that time, under Pastor Cofield's steady leadership, Whitfield Baptist continues to grow and thrive.

I am proud today to recognize Pastor Cofield's service and contributions to our community and state.

I want to close by saying thank you to Wayne for his dedication and commitment to service.

IN HONOR OF THE CLAREMONT,
NEW HAMPSHIRE AD HOC AM-
TRAK PLATFORM COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of the Claremont, New Hampshire, Ad Hoc Amtrak Platform Committee. The people of the Upper Valley owe a tremendous debt to the public servants and civic-minded citizens who took up the important work of this committee. Those individuals are: Jeffrey Albright, State Representative Raymond Gagnon, Mayor Charlene Lovett, Scott Magnuson, former City Councilor James Reed, Walter Stapleton, and former City Councilor Carolyn Towle. Since its formation in 2014, the committee has worked extensively to promote and improve rail transportation and access in the region. Through new signage around Claremont and effective digital marketing, the committee did an outstanding job of raising awareness of the value and opportunity the Amtrak Vermonter line had for the Claremont community, and vice versa. They spearheaded a campaign to construct a passenger shelter at the Claremont station with all-volunteer funding and labor. As a direct result of their efforts, ridership numbers have notably increased each of the last three years, and the New England Intercity Rail Initiative has decided that Claremont should remain included in future high speed rail service.

It is also important to recognize the national and international impact of the committee. Its members worked closely with my office to provide input and help advance the Promoting Travel, Commerce, and National Security Act, which I introduced in 2016. This legislation

paved the way for a bilateral border security agreement that allows the United States and Canada to expand preclearance customs facilities, including rail facilities for the first time. It improves travel and trade opportunities for our northern border communities while also strengthening our national security. The bill was signed into law by President Barack Obama, and in 2017 the agreement was approved by the Canadian House of Commons. I commend the committee members for all they have done to help bring this meaningful policy to fruition.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's Second Congressional District, I thank Jeffrey, Richard, Charlene, Scott, James, Walter, and Carolyn for their dedicated service and advocacy. Their achievements will continue to benefit Granite State transportation, tourism, and economic development for years to come. I am honored to recognize and congratulate them.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS AT TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate an important and longstanding part of the fabric of the 9th Congressional District of Illinois: Temple Beth Israel in suburban Skokie, north of Chicago. January 31, 2018 marks 100 years since the Temple's incorporation in the State of Illinois, and it is considered its official birthday.

Temple Beth Israel was the first Reform congregation in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago; and while its location may have changed over the last century, it has remained a stable presence in the lives of its congregants. For 100 years, Temple Beth Israel has allowed individuals and families to come together and express their Judaism—providing comfort in dire times, a place to celebrate in happier times, and an opportunity to reflect and pray.

This congregation has seen success because of the diligent work of its rabbis and staff over the years. Three different rabbis have spent more than 30 years apiece at this congregation, and each has left their mark on this institution.

Rabbi Michael A. Weinberg has served as the Temple's beloved rabbi since 1987 and is a past president of the Chicago Association of Reform Rabbis, in addition to serving in other roles of distinction. Rabbi Weinberg was preceded by Rabbi Ernest M. Lorge, who served from 1947 through 1984. Rabbi Lorge worked hard to expand the congregation, was very involved in the issues of the day, and met with President John F. Kennedy at the White House to discuss civil rights issues. Rabbi Felix S. Mendelsohn served as the first full time Rabbi for Temple Beth Israel. He began his service in 1919 and is credited with founding both the Temple Center, a Jewish social center for young adults, and National Jewish Book Week—today known as Jewish Book Month.

Today, the Temple Beth Israel congregation numbers approximately 400 families, and remains a vibrant part of the 9th Congressional

District's diverse community. I offer my sincere congratulations to Rabbi Weinberg, the congregation's past and present staff and the many congregants who are celebrating this important milestone. I wish them all the best in the years ahead and hope for another century of good work ahead for Temple Beth Israel.

HONORING MARVIN HILL OF DIERKS, ARKANSAS

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize a true American hero. Marvin Hill of Dierks, Arkansas, is a 103-year-old veteran of World War II. On Tuesday, January 30, the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System will recognize Mr. Hill with a commemorative coin in honor of his service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States.

I ask the people of Arkansas to join the VA and myself in honoring Mr. Hill and thanking him for fighting in defense of freedom.

CHINA IMPOSES COMMUNIST CONTROL OVER LARUNG GAR MONASTERY IN TIBET

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage about the action by the Chinese authorities to impose Communist Party control over Larung Gar, the Tibetan Monastery and learning center of Tibetan Buddhism.

According to information published by Human Rights Watch on January 24, 2018, some 200 Communist Party cadres and lay officials are taking over all management, finances, security, admissions, and even the choice of textbooks at the Larung Gar center, following demolitions and expulsions carried out last year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues the information released by Human Rights Watch. It is a significant blow to freedom of religion in Tibet and China, and a matter of great concern to all members of Congress.

[Human Rights Watch, Jan. 24, 2018]

CHINA: NEW CONTROLS ON TIBETAN
MONASTERY

NEW YORK—The Chinese authorities have imposed new administrative controls on the Tibetan Buddhist monastic center of Larung Gar that infringe upon freedom of religion, Human Rights Watch said today.

According to an official document obtained by Human Rights Watch, some 200 Communist Party cadres and lay officials are taking over all management, finances, security, admissions, and even the choice of textbooks at the center, following demolitions and expulsions in 2017.

"The new government controls over Larung Gar fly in the face of Party claims that China respects constitutionally protected religious beliefs," said Sophie Richardson, China director at Human Rights Watch. "The micromanagement of the Tibetan monastery encroaches on religious