

Mr. Speaker, at the height of the Civil War in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln wrote, "Honor to the Soldier, and Sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause." Each of us in this chamber and in this nation should be humbled by the courage of these brave veterans who put themselves in harm's way for our country and way of life. As a nation, we can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to them for their honor, commitment, and sacrifice in defense of the freedoms we have today.

My colleagues, please join me in thanking these veterans and the volunteers of Honor Flight of Central Oregon for their exemplary dedication and service to this great country.

THE ASTRODOME: THE EIGHTH
WONDER OF THE WORLD AND
NOW A TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL
MARKER

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as the Houston Astros lead their division, Houstonians can't help but look forward to another exciting season of Astros baseball. As the home of the reigning champions, the people of Houston have a lot to be proud of, and a lot to remember.

Today Astros games are played in the beautiful Minute Maid Ballpark, however many of us old timers remember watching the team's first game in the Astrodome in 1965. There was simply nothing else like the Dome. The players would stand in centerfield and try to hit balls straight up to see if they could hit the roof. It was a marvel for both the players and fans. It was the world's first domed stadium, the only stadium in sports to offer luxury suites, and—since everything is bigger in Texas—the largest dome on Earth.

Home to the Houston Astros for three decades, the stadium has seen thousands of people from all over our country. But Mr. Speaker, baseball fans were not the only ones making their way through the iconic Dome's doors. Elvis Presley performed seven times in the stadium, the Battle of the Sexes tennis match was played here, and the world famous Houston Livestock Show and Radio was held in the Dome for many years. Though the Dome has seen its fair share of cowboys, movie stars, and baseball players, perhaps its greatest moment was when it was transformed into a home for over 60,000 refugees fleeing the destruction of Katrina.

The Astrodome is not an abandoned baseball stadium; it is a part of Houston and Texas history. Nicknamed the Eighth wonder of the world, the Dome is a landmark loved by all Houstonians. Just recently it received its fitting designation as a Texas Historic Landmark. Though it has gone its many years without official recognition, the Astrodome has always been admired by those Houstonians and Texans who know its history. Now, the Astrodome takes its proper place in Texas history as an official Texas Historic Landmark.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING ANGEL ANDERSON

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Angel Anderson and her store, The SpiceSuite, on becoming the 2018 District of Columbia Small Business of the Year. This distinction is awarded as part of our 21st annual District of Columbia Small Business Fair, which we are holding today at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

This year, we are proud to honor Angel and The SpiceSuite, a store located at 6902 4th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20012 where customers can customize spice blends and find unique products like coconut vanilla infused honey and blueberry sugar. Angel opened The SpiceSuite just two years ago as the manifestation of a dream she did not know she had, and has since cultivated it into a community staple. A D.C. native, Angel graduated from Banneker High School, and went on to earn both her bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from Howard University. After completing her studies, she worked in education for nine years, focusing mainly on underserved communities. Angel began her teaching career at the District's Oak Hill Youth Center, eventually moving on to be a counselor and later an assistant principal at the Cesar Chavez Public Charter School.

The SpiceSuite is an extension of Angel's passion for community service. She operates the store as an avenue to promote other women-owned small businesses by sharing its space with these businesses to launch and sell their products. She has offered this opportunity to over 200 small businesses to date, at no cost to them. Angel continues to employ the various platforms at her disposal to engage the public and advocate for the underserved.

Our fair highlights the importance of small businesses to the District's economy. It provides critical information, counseling and resources to aspiring and current D.C. small business owners. Small businesses are a crucial lifeline in our local economy, and the District thrives because of the expanding success of small businesses throughout the District. We thank the Washington Convention Center for hosting us again this year; the workshop experts who are providing valuable information and assistance to small businesses; and, of course, all of the small business participants.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Angel Anderson, as well as in celebrating small businesses across the District. In the District and in districts around the country, small businesses continue to make indispensable contributions to our economies and communities.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JARED POLIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for the vote on passage of H.R. 8 (Roll Call No.

238). Had I been present, I would have voted Yes on final passage.

This bill is the result of a strong bipartisan process, and includes multiple projects beneficial to Colorado.

HONORING GORDON L. "BOX"
BOCHER

HON. THOMAS MacARTHUR

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service, scholarship, and contributions of Maj. Gordon L. "Box" Bocher, United States Air Force, retired. Specifically, I'd like to recognize his recent essay based upon his experiences during the Vietnam War. A resident of New Jersey, Maj. Gordon L. "Box" Bocher served in the United States Air Force from January of 1968 until June of 1980.

From February of 1972 until February of 1973, Gordon, served in the 16th Special Operations Squadron as a Fire Control Officer (FCO) assigned to fly the AC-130A Gunship. During that year, he flew over 170 combat sorties. He was in-theatre when the armistice was signed in Paris on January 27, 1973. While compiling research for his book and doing speaking tours, Gordon found a great deal of misinformation regarding the last year of the Vietnam War. He felt compelled to tell his story through an informative essay detailing his experiences.

Mr. Speaker, the people of New Jersey are tremendously honored to have Maj. Gordon L. "Box" Bocher, Ret. as a dedicated member of our community. It is because of his honorable service to our nation, his dedication to his community, and his work to honor the memory of all who served alongside with him, that I rise to recognize his scholarly contributions before the United State House of Representatives.

EMBRACING AUTISM

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, transitioning into adulthood from high school to college can be a difficult time for anyone. Balancing things such as what classes to take for your major, meeting new people, and finding time to study can be overwhelming. Now imagine doing all of those things while having autism.

Shaelynn "Shae" Castle was initially diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in elementary school. It wasn't until middle school when she was properly diagnosed with autism. Shae struggled socially and academically, but with the support of her family and the Humble ISD Mosaic Program, she worked hard to learn the skills to advocate for herself.

The Mosaic Program helps people with disabilities from ages 18 to 21 transition from high school to become more independent adults. While attending Mosaic, students have

the option of participating in programs at Lone Star College-Kingwood. They are taught about the disability services that are available and the accommodations to support them in class. With guidance, these students have the option to be successful college students.

At the age of 23, Shae graduated from Lone Star College-Kingwood on May 12 of this year with an associate's degree in education. She has big plans for her future. She does not let her diagnosis limit or define her. Shae utilizes the advocacy skills she learned to help students at Whispering Pines Elementary School, where she works as a tutor for special needs students. She intends on paying it forward by becoming a math teacher who helps special needs students like herself. When asked why she wants to be a special needs teacher, Shae replied "My experiences help me to help other children who are struggling. I can say to them, 'I know what you're going through.'"

Despite a large obstacle, Shae has embraced her uniqueness and always finds a way to accomplish her goals. She has the strength and willingness to overcome, and that is a quality that not all people possess. Congratulations, Shae, on all that you have accomplished and the best of luck with conquering the professional world.

And that's just the way it is.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the Chamber on Tuesday, June 5, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on Roll Call votes 231, 232, and 233.

CONGRATULATING ROB WIDMER

HON. RODNEY DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rob Widmer, who will retire this month after more than twenty-two years of service to Heartland Community College in Bloomington-Normal.

Rob has been in higher education for over forty years—half of which he spent with Heartland. He joined the college in 1996, serving as the vice president of business services until 2013, when he began his role as Heartland's third president. I can attest that he has been a great advocate for community colleges and technical education.

During his time there, Heartland expanded into one of Central Illinois' primary institutions for workforce development and is now among the state's most renowned community colleges.

This week, the newly-revitalized quad at Heartland's campus will be dedicated as the Rob Widmer Quad, in recognition of Rob's service to the school.

While he plans to travel and spend time with his four sons and ten grandchildren, I know Rob will continue serving the Bloomington-Normal community with his time and talents.

Congratulations, Rob, and best wishes on this new chapter of life.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARTHA PEEK UPON HER RETIREMENT

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Martha Lyon Peek upon her retirement as the Superintendent of the Mobile County Public School System.

Martha Peek, a native of Bayou La Batre, Alabama, has worked in the Mobile County School System for over forty years. Throughout her four decades, she has served as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and deputy superintendent. Notably, she was the first female superintendent to serve in the 180-year history of the Mobile County Public School System.

Her career in education follows behind a line of her family members who have been continuously serving in the Mobile County School System since 1908. She represents the third generation in her family to work in education, and her career carried on an important family tradition.

Martha Peek was formally named Superintendent in July 2012 after serving as Deputy Superintendent since 2008. Prior to that, she was Assistant Superintendent for Academic Affairs, Executive Director of School Improvement and Accountability, and Principal at Dixon Elementary School. Her career in education started in 1972 as an elementary teacher at Alba School before she went on to work at Fonvielle Elementary School and Brookley Elementary School.

During her tenure, Martha Peek oversaw the largest school system in the State of Alabama with over 56,000 students. She successfully changed the perception of Mobile schools, improved test scores, and increased the graduation rate. She should also take great pride in the strides she made in establishing signature academies to help connect students with the skills they need to thrive in the local workforce.

Beyond her work in the school system, she is an involved community and civic member. She serves as a board member for the United Way of Southwest Alabama and Junior Achievement of Mobile and as a representative on the American Heart Association's National Superintendent Roundtable. Additionally, she is a member of the Leadership Alabama Class XXVI. In 2015, AL.com recognized her as one of the Women Who Shape the State of Alabama.

On behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District and the countless students she impacted throughout her remarkable career, I wish Martha Peek, and her husband, Tyler, all the best upon her retirement. Her legacy will live on in the Mobile County Public School System for years to come.

2018 HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESEARCH CONFERENCE

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan sailed westward past South America, he was struck by the serenity of the waters that lay before him. He then proclaimed this body of water Pacifico, meaning "peaceful."

This Pacific Ocean was thus a fitting backdrop for a meeting of a group of people attempting to bring peace into the lives of those affected by human trafficking.

Last month, the Human Trafficking Radar Research and Data Roundtable hosted their annual Human Trafficking Research Conference. Overlooking the Pacific Ocean from their venue in Point Loma, California, individuals committed to ending human trafficking gathered to discuss and share important research and ideas.

The featured speakers of the conference included accomplished academics and professionals, leaders in their fields to combat human trafficking. Two of the speakers, however, delivered a strong message by their mere presence together at the conference.

Ebony Jones suffered sexual abuse as a young girl. Soon after her eighteenth birthday, she found herself a victim of modern day slavery. Since escaping her trafficker, she has become a strong advocate for victims of human trafficking. Motivated by her own personal experience, Jones has worked to spread her message, people outside of low-income backgrounds are not immune to exploitation by traffickers.

Armand King once spent time behind bars for his life of crime, trafficking young women. But now, he's left his former life behind him. Armand is co-founder of Paving Great Futures, an organization that strives to drive at-risk individuals from a life of crime to opportunities of legitimate, respectable professions. King says he was lucky to be alive, and he relishes the opportunity to provide a unique and important perspective on human trafficking at the conference.

Together, near the very spot where the first Europeans landed in California several hundred years ago, Armand and Ebony urged the conference to pursue a new beginning: a world without human trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, America needs more individuals like Ebony Jones and Armand King coming together to discuss ways in which we can reduce or eliminate human trafficking altogether. This scourge on humanity traumatizes the lives of thousands of people around the world, and their perspectives and support are a valuable asset as we continue the fight against this heinous crime.

Above all, Armand and Ebony strive to bring to the world what Magellan saw in those serene waters all those years ago: peace.

And that's just the way it is.