

just five, with plans to further reduce that number. Tom has been an outspoken advocate for improving this infrastructure, especially those traveling with heavy farm equipment. Most of the bridges had been made of timber during the 1920's and 50's, and were deteriorating rapidly.

Tom has been a strong advocate for improving the Highway Department facility on Illinois Route 16. He has worked relentlessly to make sure Jersey County's Highway Department employees and their equipment is being protected and kept safe especially during the harsh winter months.

Tom is an exceptional individual within my congressional district. His leadership and expertise has made a lasting impact on Jersey County. Congratulations, Tom, on receiving the 2017 Rural County Engineer Award. I look forward to continuing to work with him throughout the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DIANE BLACK

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I am not recorded for roll call votes because I was unavoidably detained. I wish to reflect my intent and strong support for the following legislation to address the opioid crisis.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. H.R. 2851, Roll. 268; YEA on Roll Call No. H.R. 5735, Roll. 266; YEA on Roll Call No. H.R. 5890, Roll. 263; and YEA on Roll Call No. H.R. 5891, Roll. 264.

HONORING ALFIO RAUSA, MD, MPH

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Alfio Rausa, M.D., a public health hero who worked valiantly for half a century to improve the health of Mississippians.

Dr. Alfio Rausa, M.D. passed away at home after several months of illness on January 3, 2018. He leaves a legacy of dedication to countless public health and community efforts, including his work at the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH); his work as a family medicine physician; his contributions to the Golden Age Nursing Home; his founding of Life Help, a regional mental health and retardation center; his founding of a youth soccer league; his work as Chairman of the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation; and his contributions to many other projects and boards. He is the recipient of many awards and honors, including the 2007 Greenwood Commonwealth Community Service Award and the 1992 Felix J. Underwood Award for public health service.

Dr. Rausa originally came to Greenwood as a Lieutenant Commander with the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, a position he held from 1966 to 1970. Raised in the Bronx, Dr. Rausa's intention was

to stay in Mississippi for a year, but his plans changed when he saw all the work to be done.

In 1970, Dr. Rausa accepted a position as Regional Public Health Officer in Greenwood with MSDH, and in 1980, he was promoted to District Health Officer. At first he was over Public Health District III and then over District I as well, for a total of 18 counties, including some of the poorest in the state. He held this position until last summer when he retired, partly because of the consolidation of offices due to state budget cuts.

As District Health Officer, one of the projects for which Dr. Rausa served as medical consultant was WIC and its breastfeeding peer counselor program. He fully supported this program, always encouraged the peer counselors, and was always willing to speak with other physicians, the media, hospitals, or at events about the benefits of breastfeeding. He emceed CHAMPS' first conference in Mississippi in 2015, "The Delta Breastfeeding Summit," and gave opening comments on the importance of breastfeeding.

Freddie White-Johnson, MPPA, President and Founder of the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation, where Dr. Rausa served as Chairman until his death, also has fond memories of Dr. Rausa. She knew him since she was 29 years old when she worked for him on a project called Partners for Improved Nutrition and Health and then at MSDH.

He served as District III health officer for the Mississippi Department of Health, overseeing its disease-control and wellness efforts in a nine county area that included Leflore and Carroll counties.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Alfio Rausa, MD, MPH for his dedication to serving others.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS,
RUDY BALDONI

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have the Big Brothers Big Sisters national headquarters in my district, Tampa, Florida. Big Brothers Big Sisters is led by the former two-term mayor, Pam Iorio who is beloved in Tampa, and we are proud of her and Big Brothers Big Sisters across America. Today in that spirit, I rise to honor the accomplishments of a true advocate for children everywhere, Mr. Rudy Baldoni. His tireless work for Big Brothers Big Sisters has impacted the lives of countless youths. I am grateful to recognize the incredible work he has put into the nation's oldest and most effective mentoring organization.

Mr. Baldoni, as the two-year National Board Chairman of Big Brothers Big Sisters, has been instrumental in creating meaningful and positive change within this incredible organization and for young people who need a supportive mentor. Today, he continues to dedicate his time and energy to this important cause—leading the board in a time of progress and change.

Mr. Baldoni was born and grew up in California, eventually attending the University of Southern California. He earned his J.D. from

Western State's College of Law and attended UC Irvine in 1989 to earn another degree in Commercial and Industrial Development and Management. Following his education, Mr. Baldoni worked in real estate development as President of Arnel Development Company until 2007 and became President and CEO of Newport Investment Associates in 2008, where he continued to manage growth and venture capital investments.

Mr. Baldoni got his start with Big Brothers Big Sisters after volunteering to host a dinner for the Orange County, California affiliate. In the fine tradition of volunteer organizations everywhere, after raising more money than any previous dinner, he found himself chairing the board. In 2012, Mr. Baldoni joined the National Board. His passion and drive for Big Brothers Big Sisters caused him to stand out, as he drove to find new ways to improve the organization and both expand and improve its reach. Mr. Baldoni was named National Board Chairman in 2016 and was instrumental in sculpting a five-year plan for the organization, along with the introduction of new modern technology that tracks the match between a Big and a Little. He has also played a huge role in adopting new criteria for all Big Brother Big Sister affiliates to improve standardization between chapters and has worked to rebrand the organization as a whole.

Overall, Mr. Baldoni's time working with Big Brothers Big Sisters has been characterized by his unwavering loyalty and dedication to this cause of mentorship. His national perspective combined with a local understanding of issues has made him an incredibly gifted leader who continues to work for change. His unwavering and endless dedication to this cause has made him a true champion for kids.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, proud home of the national headquarters for Big Brothers Big Sisters, I am proud to honor Mr. Baldoni for his formidable efforts and investment in our children all across America. The time and energy he has put into this organization shaped the futures of children from all different backgrounds. By strengthening communities and allowing these positive relationships to grow within Big Brothers Big Sisters, his work empowers children from Tampa Bay and beyond to achieve, succeed and flourish a blessing not just for them but for all of us.

RECOVERING AT THE REFUGE
RANCH

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in Austin, Texas there is a beautiful community with pets, rooms for arts and music, and beds for 48 young girls. No, this is not a sorority house, rather it is a safe haven for victims of domestic sex trafficking.

Known as The Refuge Ranch, this community is designed to assist girls that have been rescued from the evils of sex trafficking and will open its doors this coming August. When the first girls arrive at the ranch, they will have access to a school, counselors, and different types of therapy including art, garden, and music therapy.