

Committee has improved our nation's ability to forecast the weather, study the ocean, support the nation's fishing industry, protect intellectual property rights, respond to natural disasters, and improve the course of justice.

Aschley will be missed by the Committee. We wish her well, thank her for her years of service, and know that she will excel at whatever future endeavors she pursues.

RECOGNIZING MS. MELINDA DYE FOR RECEIVING A PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM THE HEALTHSOUTH REHABILITATION HOSPITAL OF ALTOONA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mindy Dye, one of the winners of the 25th annual Personal Achievement Award from the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Altoona. This award is given to encourage and recognize those who have made an outstanding effort to deal with or overcome a disability. This year, Mindy has earned that distinction.

Mindy suffered a major stroke in December 2017 that affected her speech and body. She could not walk, talk and lost all muscle control on her right side. Every day was a struggle in therapy as she tried to regain her strength, balance, ability to walk and her ability to speak. Another setback occurred a few months later during her cranium replacement surgery when she ended up with an infection that required an emergency procedure and several months of antibiotics. Ultimately, Mindy resumed her therapy, was always willing to do her best, maintained a positive attitude, and was motivated to get better.

Today, Mindy has made an amazing recovery through her hard work and determination. Her extremity strength, balance and functional mobility have returned, and she continues to make progress in therapy. She is now able to enjoy gardening, hiking and spending time with her family.

I am humbled to recognize the truly impressive recovery Mindy has made. Her strength and positivity in the face of such adversity is remarkable. As such, it is my pleasure to wish Mindy the best as she continues to reclaim her health and life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber on Wednesday, September 12, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on roll call votes 394, 395, and 396.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF IAFF LOCAL 3886

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3886 of Spotsylvania, a brave group of men and women who every day put their service to the community above self. Additionally, I would like to recognize that this year is the 100th anniversary of the IAFF: celebrating a century of progress through unity.

IAFF Local 3886 is made up of over 125 full-time members who help to keep and protect the citizens of Spotsylvania County, Virginia. To accomplish this incredible task, Local 3886 operates 24/7 out of six fire stations throughout the county and 13/5 at an additional four. With advanced life support and specialty equipment, the men and women of this proud organization provide a service for which mere thanks is never enough. As professional firefighters, they are true to the name; professionalism, dependability, and distinction underlies the entirety of their work.

The IAFF as a whole provides firefighters for many different operations, including to help protect the men and women of our armed forces. The services of the IAFF extend to firefighting crews for military bases throughout the country and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of the IAFF and IAFF Local 3886. Words alone cannot express our gratitude. May God bless the operations of the IAFF and Local 3886, and I look forward to seeing their excellence for many years into the future.

REVIEWING CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we held a hearing at the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, which I chair.

Our first order of business was to note that today many Ethiopians are celebrating the start of the New Year under the Ethiopian calendar. To our Ethiopian friends who observe the new year, I wish to say "Enkutatash"—Happy New Year.

Many of the hearings that this subcommittee holds are hearings of condemnation—for abuses of human rights, for failures of governance, and for holding accountable those who betray the public trust.

Yesterday's hearing, however, struck a different tone—one not of condemnation, but of commendation for the great strides Ethiopia has made since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed assumed authority in April of this year.

Consider where we were just over a year ago. A State of Emergency existed, and thousands of political prisoners languished in jail. A cold war standoff existed between Ethiopia and its neighbor Eritrea.

As this subcommittee pointed out in a hearing we held in March of 2017, "increasingly repressive policies have diminished political space and threaten to radicalize not only the political opposition but also civil society by frustrating their ability to exercise their rights under law."

In response to this, I introduced, along with original cosponsors KAREN BASS and MIKE COFFMAN, H. Res. 128, a resolution "Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia." The resolution set forth milestones which needed to be met, and passed thanks to the leadership of many—including Chairman ED ROYCE who guided the Resolution through Foreign Affairs Committee markup and Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY, who scheduled a vote on H. Res. 128 that passed the House unopposed and sent a clear message of Congressional resolve on the need for civil and political reform in Ethiopia.

But success of this measure was due in largest part to the efforts of the Ethiopian diaspora community in the United States, which came together to demand that egregious human rights abuses immediately cease, and that fundamental human rights must be promoted and protected for all in Ethiopia.

Indeed, one of the greatest collateral benefits brought about by passage of H. Res. 128 is the political effectiveness of the Ethiopian American community, which provided a textbook civics lesson for all of us to admire. It is thanks to their tireless efforts of contacting your congressional representatives, of making your case in a persistent and respectful manner that helped spur Congress to action.

Since assuming office, Prime Minister Abiy has begun to implement some of the very reforms that H. Res. 128 called for. He has released thousands of political prisoners, and lifted the state of emergency, for example.

But he has also reached out to the diaspora community, catalyzed an end to a schism that had plagued the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and initiated an historic peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea this past July. Indeed, it is hoped that his domestic reforms will also inspire Eritrea, which remains a repressive regime, to undertake similar internal reforms.

Just a few weeks ago, Ranking Member KAREN BASS and I visited the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, where we met with Prime Minister Abiy and a broad array of individuals and groups, including His Holiness, Abune Mathias I. One impression I had—was of a profound feeling of change and optimism.

For what he has accomplished in less than half a year, Prime Minister deserves praise and encouragement. Yet we still must keep in mind that expectations have been raised, and the reforms he has begun must continue.

For example, the notorious Charities and Society Proclamation and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, both passed in 2009, remain on the books and thus retain the potential to stifle legitimate civil society organizations and political speech.

Many former prisoners and torture victims still demand justice. Ranking Member BASS and I met with a group of torture victims in Addis Ababa, and what they described as having been done to them was horrific. One refrain we heard, including from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, is that there is a need for Truth and Reconciliation in order for the country to move forward.