

Master of Education, AA certification, in 1973 from Alabama State University.

As an educator, she taught at North Highland School, Prattville Intermediate School and Autauga County Training School System. She later taught at Central Alabama OIC under the leadership of Mrs. Consuella Harper.

As an active member of Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, she was a member of the Young Matrons under the pastorate of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., the sanctuary choir, The Red Circle, a Sunday School teacher, The April Club and Vacation Bible School for over 50 years.

She was involved in Les Voguettes and ISTAP (I Support the Athletic Program) at Alabama State University.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life of Rebecca May Wood Stringer Holbert.

THE THREAT OF TERRORISM IS STILL VERY PRESENT

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the long war on terrorism is not over. From North Africa to Southeast Asia, radical jihadism fights on from the shadows, waiting for us to grow complacent once again. We have claimed victory and lowered our guard too many times before only to have terrorist groups grow resurgent and deadly again. The scourge of violent Islamism is a multigeneration challenge as the battle against communism was decades ago. While we have had many successes, the threat remains and must be confronted.

Looking at where extremism still lives today we see many familiar battlefields. In the Philippines, a ISIS affiliate was handed a major defeat last year at the city of Marawi. But remnants of this group live on, recruiting and scheming in the jungle. Only by denying them an opportunity to regroup and gain ground again can we prevent them from attracting new supporters and new momentum.

Moving to Pakistan, we still find a state that claims to be an American ally but allows terrorist leaders to operate freely in the open. For too long we have provided billions of dollars to the Pakistani government as they betrayed us. The Taliban, al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and other violent groups continue to find safe haven in Pakistan. They have injected their violent ideology into mainstream Pakistani politics, causing minorities to be routinely persecuted through despotic blasphemy laws. Pakistan's partnership with terrorism has led to continued violence within its neighbors India and Afghanistan. If Pakistan had truly been our ally, the Taliban would never had a place to run to after our intervention in Afghanistan. Yet, more than 17 years later, the Taliban is resurgent, retaking Afghan districts that we had long ago secured through American blood and treasure. We must not abandon this fight, but instead find a solution that ensures that al-Qaeda is never able to return and that the Taliban lay down their weapons and respect Afghanistan's young democracy.

Nonetheless, Pakistan is not the only terrorist sponsoring state fueling instability in the region. Iran is also playing its part in arming and assisting terrorists fighting our forces in

Afghanistan and across the Middle East. After signing the nuclear deal with the Obama administration, the Mullahs in Iran received billions of dollars in sanctions relief that was diverted directly to their legion of terrorist proxies. Now the Middle East is engulfed in chaos as Iran's militias march against our allies. Proxies like Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Kataib Hezbollah, the Houthis, and others are operating with impunity, massacring thousands in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. They have targeted Americans in Iraq and Syria and have plans to attack our friends in Israel. This gathering storm will lead to inevitable conflict if we do nothing.

Meanwhile ISIS has gone underground. While we have destroyed the so-called caliphate that inspired dozens of attacks in the U.S. and Europe, the deadly terror group has reverted to its insurgent roots. When President Obama foolishly withdrew our troops from Iraq in 2011, there were no more than 700 fighters remaining in ISIS's predecessor. The State Department even reduced the bounty for ISIS's eventual leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, believing the group was a shell of its former self. But those assumptions proved wrong. Without U.S. forces to stop their advance and local societies plagued with Iranian-backed sectarianism, ISIS rose from the ashes to dominate an area the size of Britain. ISIS still has thousands of fighters dispersed throughout Iraq and Syria. We must not repeat Obama's mistake. A committed strategy to ensure ISIS's enduring defeat is required moving forward. We must send a signal to friends and adversaries alike that America is not turning its back on the region again.

No ally knows the persistent struggle against terrorism more than Israel. Today, terrorists from Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and ISIS in Sinai are seeking Israel's destruction. Just recently Israel discover attack tunnels crossing from Lebanon into its territory which Hezbollah had built for the sole purpose of causing murder and mayhem in the Jewish State. America continues to stand firmly with Israel, providing the needed aid to keep our shared enemies at bay. But as instability continues throughout the region, Iran and other extremists will plot and recruit to wage war on our Israeli friends. Our duty as allies requires us to be vigilant in addressing these emerging threats before they become major obstacles for peace.

Lastly, looking at North Africa and the Sahel new challenges have risen. Where there were once only about 100 al-Qaeda-linked terrorists, there is now a multitude of extremist networks with as many as 10,000 fighters. Groups like Boko Haram, al-Shabab, ISIS, and Ansar al-Sharia have sowed chaos in places like Nigeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Somalia, preventing poor nations from reaching their full potential. These fragile states need a steady ally to help build their capabilities and lead a joint campaign to seek out and destroy the transnational terrorist threat in the region. Rather than pour endless taxpayer dollars into development efforts that are undone by local extremists, we need to formulate a strategy that addresses the lasting security vacuum terrorists have exploited.

The violent ideology that has motivated thousands to wage a life or death struggle against the United States and its allies is not gone. This ideology has long been present, but it

was not until the September 11th attacks that we woke up to its lethal ability and reach. Since then we have learned that this cancerous radical belief is adaptive and will not be defeated in one decisive battle. This is a long war we have no choice but to fight. We must also adapt our thinking and find committed partners who we can stand with us in this global struggle.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING CARLOS TORRES

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my fellow lawmakers: who is protecting those that protected this nation?

Carlos Torres, an Army veteran who served during the Vietnam War, passed away on Sunday, December 9, 2018, at the age of 64. However, Mr. Torres did not leave this Earth in the home he served. Instead, he left us having been isolated by a country that failed to provide him his due citizenship after military service.

Mr. Torres, an immigrant from Mexico, joined the U.S. Army with the promise and hope of becoming an American citizen following his service. However, once he completed his service, he was denied, he was ignored, and he was left unprotected by a system that abandoned so many others. Distracted by this lack of care and naturalization progress, Mr. Torres—like so many others—turned to other means of catharsis.

He was caught with marijuana. He was charged. He was deported. He was sent back to Mexico, making less than a dollar a day. Without VA benefits. Without his family. Without hope.

On Thursday, December 13, 2018, he returned to the United States, but this time, he returned in death.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans, we failed Carlos Torres and so many like him. We cannot continue to desert these American patriots. The time for retribution is now.

Last year, I introduced H.R. 3429, the Repatriate Our Patriots Act, a bill that would create a pathway to citizenship for deported veterans who held a clean record prior to service. Time is running out. The lives of these men and women depend on our immediate actions. We must pass this bill. We must make amends. We must do so now for the thousands of deported veterans, for their families, for Carlos Torres.

COMMENDING MARIA LOURDES BENITEZ

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Maria Lourdes Benitez for her service to my office and the 21st Congressional District of California over the past year.

Maria Benitez was born on November 23, 1966 in Los Angeles and was raised in Escondido, California. After graduating from Orange

Glen High School, Maria received her Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, with an emphasis in Criminal Justice, from National University in San Diego, California.

Maria met her future husband, Mr. Roman Benitez, while attending National University. They married soon after her graduation. At the time, Roman was an officer in the United States Navy. Because of his military service, they have been able to live in a variety of places including San Diego, Monterrey, and Japan.

Mrs. Benitez and her husband moved to Lemoore, California in 2007 with both taking positions at Lemoore Naval Air Station. Maria was hired as a Human Resource Assistant, eventually becoming a Work and Family Life Consultant. In this role, she aided military families through transitions, career searches, professional development, and financial counseling. Mrs. Benitez is also a small business owner, running an esthetician business in Hanford, California.

Maria became a member of my Congressional Team this year, serving as Staff Assistant in my Hanford, California Office. She quickly proved herself to be an invaluable asset, overseeing the daily operations of my district office. This included the production of tens of thousands of congressional certificates and management of the internship program. Maria also presented awards on my behalf at events in Kings County, representing the team's values with poise and professionalism. She was known for her ability to provide the highest level of service to my constituents, aiding hundreds of people with their various concerns.

Maria was also instrumental in the planning and implementation of the 21st Congressional District's 2018 Military Academy Nominations. With responsibilities ranging from informational events to potential nominee interviews, Maria proved herself to be a strong communicator to high school students and educators. She generated high interest throughout the community and aided multiple students with nominations to the academies. Her effectiveness in constituent service combined with her powerful ability to connect with people made Maria an invaluable member of my team and a true public servant to the people of California's Central Valley.

Outside work, Maria enjoys spending quality time with her husband. They remain active in local community organizations and are known as active volunteers. They also enjoy traveling. Their favorite trips are visits with their two beloved children, Alexandra and Roman Jr.

This January, Mrs. Benitez will be moving onto new ventures. Knowing Maria, her character and work ethic, I have no doubt she will continue to achieve many great things. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in commending Maria Lourdes Benitez for her public service to the people of the Central Valley and wishing her the very best in this next chapter of her life.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF DUANE
CHAPMAN

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Mr. DeSAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Duane Chapman, a longtime resident of Richmond, CA. Duane was a dedicated volunteer for the Richmond Police Department and a passionate advocate for youth, the LGBTQ+ community, and our homeless population.

Duane began his career of service as a nurse and homeless outreach specialist for Contra Costa County. It was in this role that he formed a deep partnership with the Richmond Police Department and decided to volunteer his time working on crime prevention and raising community awareness of the realities of police work.

Duane demonstrated his passion for serving others through his leadership and participation in important community boards and programs. He served as Chair of both the Human Relations Commission and the Contra Costa County Mental Health Commission. Duane also participated in the Road to the Future Foster Care Youth Conference and the Richmond Police Activities League Scholarship Program.

In addition, Duane was a tireless advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. In 2014, he co-founded the Richmond Rainbow Pride, an organization that encouraged its members to advocate for the interest of their community and to promote their visibility in Richmond.

With his passing, Duane leaves behind a legacy as an ally for marginalized communities.

TRIBUTE TO GARY FRIEDMAN

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Judge Gary T. Friedman. Judge Friedman retired this year following 35 years of judicial excellence on the Kern County Superior Court.

Born and raised in Bakersfield, California, Judge Friedman's future in law was foreshadowed by his keen interest in watching his father, an oilman, negotiate with attorneys for the family business. He found the idea of helping people to resolve disputes compelling, and committed himself to his studies at Garces Memorial High School and later Bakersfield College while concurrently working for both his father's oil company as well as shepherding on his family's farm. Upon completing his studies at Bakersfield College, Judge Friedman furthered his education at the University of California, Santa Barbara and later earned his law degree at the University of California, Berkeley. After passing the bar exam, he served as a deputy district attorney, worked in various civil law firms, and became the first federal magistrate judge in Kern County before serving on the Superior Court.

Over his career, Judge Friedman heard a number of cases, many of which stretched on for months. In fact, he bears the unique dis-

tingtion of presiding over the longest gang trial in Kern County history. Other cases he heard encompassed the worst of humanity—criminal cases that inflicted incredible and lasting trauma to victims and their families. Yet through each trial he presided over, Judge Friedman made everyone in his courtroom feel comfortable in even the tensest of moments, using genuine kindness and a gentle sense of self-deprecating humor to keep litigants and witnesses at ease. Judge Friedman treated each person who entered his courtroom with all the dignity and respect owed to them in the court of law and was as tenacious as he was ethical in his dogged pursuit of the equal administration of law and justice. These qualities are all the hallmarks of a great judge, and perhaps even moreso, all the hallmarks of a great person.

There are not many judges like Judge Gary Friedman, and while it is the County's loss to see him leave his post on the Superior Court, it comforts me to know that he plans to transition to practicing civil law and will remain a fixture in the Kern County legal community. I have had the privilege of getting to know Gary and his wife, Gloria, over the years as members of Bakersfield Downtown Rotary, and I am looking forward to many more spirited conversations about his days, as he puts it, "toiling in the vineyards of justice" for years to come. As he embarks on this new adventure, I wish Judge Friedman all the best and thank him for his immense work in service to our community.

CONGRATULATING MITRE CORPORATION ON ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate The MITRE Corporation on its 60th anniversary this year.

MITRE is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to solve problems for a safer world. The company operates seven federally-funded research and development centers, each of which is sponsored by one or more federal agencies. MITRE works in the public interest, free from commercial conflicts of interest. The company's roughly 8,700 employees are located at its two primary locations in McLean, Virginia and Bedford, Massachusetts, as well as at other sites across the country and overseas. MITRE's employees support their federal sponsors across a full spectrum of analysis, planning and concept development; research and development; engineering; and systems acquisition work. They focus on some of the most challenging technical problems facing our nation—work that requires intimate knowledge of their federal sponsors' operating landscapes, demands objective analysis, and often involves sensitive or proprietary government and industry data.

MITRE has made immense contributions to our nation's security and safety over the last 60 years. I congratulate its leadership and staff and wish them many more years of success.