

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day in the history of the House. Some 21 years ago, a deranged individual came through the door that we now call the Memorial Door and took the lives of two of our officers.

I rise to pay tribute to my constituent Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John Gibson from the State of Virginia. Both of them were shot and killed defending this Capitol 21 years ago today, July 24, 1998.

A lone gunman burst through what we now call the Memorial Door and attacked this sacred home of American democracy. These brave officers, whom we remember today, placed themselves in the line of fire and gave their lives to protect Members, staff, and visitors in the building that morning.

Memorial Door, Mr. Speaker, is right outside my office. I go through it almost every day. Every time I pass through it, I look at the memorial plaque and remember these two extraordinary and brave men whose sacrifice will not be forgotten by those who serve in and work in this House, by their brothers and sisters in the Capitol Police force who still stand sentry and watch over it, and by their grateful fellow Americans.

Today, America, let us pay tribute to Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson and give our thanks to all the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police and, indeed, to all law enforcement officers who, every morning, get up and put a badge perhaps on their chest or on their belt or in their wallet and go out to protect us, their neighbors, their friends.

Let us thank all law enforcement officers in communities across this country for their service, their dedication, and their sacrifices, which make the exercise of democracy possible.

HONORING MELINDA WALKER UPON HER
RETIREMENT AS CHIEF REPORTER OF DEBATES

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I just spoke about two who served our Capitol and our country. Unhappily, they lost their lives.

I now speak about one who has served our House of Representatives as an institution much more happily, because she has served so well and so faithfully and so long and is now retiring, hopefully, to a very happy retirement.

We could not do our job representing the American people without the tireless and sometimes thankless labors of the men and women who make this House function behind the scenes.

They sit at the desk behind us. They sit at the upper rostrum. They make a difference. And they record what we have to say.

From the Clerk's Office to the Parliamentarian staff, from the C-SPAN crew to the stenographers, the nonpartisan, professional staff who enable the work of the House and its Members are central to the success of our constitutional mission.

The House has relied on the services of shorthand reporters of debates for

almost 200 years, and the verbatim proceedings of House business have been published as the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD since 1873.

We have a young woman who is now taking down my remarks, which may or may not be profound, but somebody will be able to say: "What did Hoyer say?" "What did my Representative say?"

A division of the Office of the Clerk, the Office of Official Reporters is charged with providing nonpartisan, professional stenographic services for the House floor, committees, and leadership.

It has grown from a 5-person shop in the 19th century to a diverse 43-person operation today. They work extraordinarily long hours; they work very hard; and they are extraordinarily competent.

Today, I join all my colleagues in thanking one of those outstanding, wonderful individuals who is retiring as the Chief Reporter of Debates, Melinda Walker.

Melinda is with us on the floor today. Melinda, thank you very much.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, if it weren't out of order, I would mention that her family is in the gallery, but because that is not in order, I won't do that.

Melinda will step down in August, after more than 20 years of service to the House of Representatives.

A proud native of Texas, Melinda came to the House in 1999, after serving as a court reporter for the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania.

Her career began after graduating from the Stenograph Institute of Texas in 1989, and her work took her around the country and across the world, with positions in the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and South Africa.

Melinda has reported both House committee hearings and floor proceedings. She has taken down committee testimony from two Chief Justices of the Supreme Court and three Secretaries of State, among many others.

On the floor, Melinda has reported the State of the Union messages for three Presidents, as well as the remarks of numerous foreign dignitaries during joint meetings of Congress.

Upon Melinda's promotion to Chief Reporter in 2015, she led the team of reporters and staff in charge of the production of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Under her watch, the office has been successful in meeting its daily production deadlines, while capturing the intricate parliamentary nuances of House proceedings.

Melinda has contributed a fully revised and updated style and formatting manual, more than 200 pages long, for the Office of Official Reporters. Americans will be advantaged by that work for decades to come.

She has been recognized by the National Court Reporters Association as a Registered Professional Reporter and a

Certified Manager of Reporting Services, and she remains a certified shorthand reporter in her native Texas.

Melinda plans to return to her hometown of San Saba, Texas, and spend more time with her family and faithful dog, Bleu.

Lucky dog to have Melinda back.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking Melinda Walker for her many years of distinguished and dedicated service to the House and in wishing her the very best in retirement.

Melinda, we owe you and your colleagues a debt of gratitude. You silently serve and sit and listen to verb after noun after adjective after word after word after word—and you stay awake. It is amazing. And you do it so well, to the advantage of all of us who serve here, but, much more importantly, to the advantage of the people of the United States, who will know what their Representatives say on their behalf and will be, therefore, able, in a democracy, to make a sound judgment as to whether those words are the words they want intoned on this floor on their behalf.

So, Melinda, to you and to all of your colleagues, we say thank you. Godspeed. Be well.

RECOGNIZING EDD SORENSON OF
JACKSON COUNTY, FLORIDA

(Mr. DUNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a local hero from Jackson County, Florida.

Mr. Edd Sorenson is known internationally for his courageous and skillful ability to rescue and retrieve cave divers. Just this past March, he was called upon in the Dominican Republic to retrieve two bodies that were on the brink of never being recovered due to the dangerous conditions.

His most recent courageous rescue took place in Tennessee, where he was called upon, in the middle of the night, to save the life of a professional cave diver, Josh Bratchley, widely known as the man who saved the Thai soccer team last year from their cave incident.

When Edd is not answering a call for the next cave rescue, you will find him managing his cave diving business in Marianna, Florida, where he is a cave dive instructor.

Edd is a truly remarkable individual. Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Mr. Edd Sorenson for his heroic and selfless actions that have saved the lives of many and brought closure to families that, otherwise, would never have been possible.

□ 1215

THE PLIGHT OF ETHIOPIAN
ISRAELIS IN ISRAEL

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1