epidemic and to celebrate the monument's renovation, which includes the addition of more than 1,000 new names of community members we have lost to AIDS.

The Wall Las Memorias AIDS Monument is the only publicly funded AIDS monument in the country. Its rededication marks a momentous occasion in my district, honoring the community members we lost to the HIV epidemic and highlighting the efforts of those who have fought to end it.

Today, we stand with our local and international community and show our support to the people living with HIV. It is estimated that over 38 million people worldwide are living with the virus, which means that there is still work to be done to advance awareness, prevention, inclusion, and equity to ensure better health for all people affected by HIV and AIDS.

I would like to thank The Wall Las Memorias Project for rededicating this monument on World AIDS Day as well as providing resources and support to those that are disproportionately affected by the virus.

Let us continue to remember those we have lost to AIDS and support those currently living with HIV. May our community find comfort in celebrating life on World AIDS Day.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 96TH ANNUAL TREK TO THE NATION'S CHRISTMAS TREE

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Sanger Chamber of Commerce's Annual Trek to the Nation's Christmas Tree Ceremony at Kings Canyon National Park.

The General Grant Tree, growing in the Kings Canyon National Park, is said to be over 1,650 years old. On April 28, 1926, at the request of the citizens of Sanger, the General Grant Tree was dedicated by the Federal Government as the Nation's Christmas Tree.

Thanks to the dedication and interest from the great residents of Sanger, the Nation's Christmas Tree is renown across the country and the world. Sanger, California, was recognized as the Nation's Christmas Tree City by the Post Office Department on October 1, 1949.

The General Grant Tree is a constant reminder of the sacrifices of the men and women of the Armed Forces who have served, fought, and died to keep our nation free. This national shrine preserves the spiritual, human, and civil rights upon which America was founded.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the Sanger Chamber of Commerce in celebration of the 96th Annual Trek to the Nation's Christmas Tree.

HEALTH BILLS UNDER CONSIDERATION

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of seven bills that originated in the Health Subcommittee of Energy & Commerce. I'm proud of my Subcommittee's bipartisan work on these critical bills which tackle hard problems, including substance use treatment, vaccine access, and the social inequities that result in poor health outcomes, especially for mothers and people of color.

Two of the bills we're considering help address the overdose crisis our nation currently faces. According to the CDC, overdose deaths spiked after the start of the pandemic. There were 93,000 overdose deaths in 2020, a 30 percent increase from the year prior, making 2020 the deadliest year for overdoses on record, with synthetic opioids the primary driver of the overall increase in overdose deaths across America.

H.R. 2355, the "Opioid Prescription Verification Act of 2021," enables HHS and the CDC to help combat this urgent overdose epidemic by facilitating responsible, informed dispensing of controlled substances. I thank my colleagues Reps. RODNEY DAVIS, GUS BILIRAKIS, and ANN WAGNER for authoring this legislation.

H.R. 2364, the "Synthetic Opioid Danger Awareness Act," directs the CDC to conduct a public awareness campaign on the dangers of synthetic opioids and available treatments. It also requires the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to make educational materials for first responders about synthetic opioid exposure prevention. I thank my colleagues Reps. ANDY KIM and CHRIS PAPPAS for authoring this legislation.

The next three bills aim to ensure that every American, no matter their age. race, or income, are empowered to receive the "dose of hope" from vaccine protection. As we've seen during the pandemic, there are lifesaving benefits of safe, effective, and free vaccines.

H.R. 951, the "Maternal Vaccination Act," helps to enhance maternal health care quality and outcomes. It authorizes $2 million annually for the next four years to increase awareness of the importance of combatting vaccine-preventable infection diseases during pregnancy. In the United States, pregnant women and infants are disproportionately susceptible to complications of infectious diseases such as influenza and whooping cough. Available vaccine data shows that vaccinations against these diseases confer protection to both mothers and newborns with no increased risk of adverse effects on pregnancy outcomes, and they are highly recommended by the CDC. I thank my colleague Rep. TERRI SEWELL for authoring this legislation.

H.R. 550, the "Immunization Infrastructure Modernization Act of 2021," will create a national policy framework and provide resources to improve immunization information systems allowing for better management of routine vaccinations and enhancing our public health response to future pandemics. I thank my colleagues Reps. ANN KUSTER and LARRY BUCSHON for their leadership authoring this legislation.

H.R. 1550, the "PREVENT HPV Cancers Act of 2021," will create a national CDC public awareness campaign targeted to communities with the lowest HPV vaccination rates to increase vaccinations and prevent HPV cancers. I thank my colleague Rep. KATHY CASTOR for her leadership authoring this legislation.

The final two bills address social inequities that result in poor health outcomes and hurt the most vulnerable amongst us.

H.R. 4026, the "Social Determinants of Health Data Analysis Act of 2021," calls for a GAO report on the HHS Secretary's actions to help inform Congress' next steps in addressing the factors that are at the heart of the health disparities across the country. I thank my colleagues Reps. MICHAEL BURGESS and LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER for authoring this legislation.

H.R. 3894, the "CARING for Social Determinants Act of 2021," directs the HHS to provide guidance to states on how to address social determinants of health through Medicaid and CHIP. I thank my colleagues Reps. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER and GUS BILIRAKIS for authoring this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to vote for these bills and I thank the members of the House Health Subcommittee and the bipartisan sponsors of each bill for their good work.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote on November 30, 2021 for Roll Call Vote 387 and Roll Call 388. Had I been present, my vote would have been the following: Yea on Roll Call Vote 387 and Yea on Roll Call Vote 388.

TRIBUTE TO DR. STEVE AARON WILSON

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a life-long educator who has had a tremendous impact on the students of South Carolina. It is my honor to congratulate Dr. Steve Wilson, as he retires after more than 50 years of service to public education. He leaves a legacy of excellence that will continue to benefit future generations.

Dr. Wilson was born in Fairfield County, South Carolina, the oldest of nine children born to Aaron and Lugenia Wilson. From an early age, his parents instilled in him the importance of education to rise above the modest means of his childhood. Dr. Wilson graduated from McCrorey-Liston High School in Blair, South Carolina, where he excelled in academics and athletics.

He was able to secure scholarships, work study, financial aid and student loans to pay for his higher education at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina. There he earned a degree in biology and built friendships and relationships that lasted throughout his life.