

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. STEVE COHEN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2011*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I inadvertently cast a "yea" vote on rollcall No. 537, as part of the consideration of the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. I would like to change my vote on the amendment to "nay."

When I cast my vote, I was under the impression that this amendment was a measure solely designed to reduce the federal deficit. However, after casting my vote I learned that this deceptive policy amendment specifically zeroes out money for climate change projects within the Corps' Operations and Maintenance Program. I oppose this amendment as I believe that the Corps and the entire federal government need to work quickly to reduce carbon emissions and to adapt infrastructure so it is capable of withstanding the impacts of climate change. I also oppose the amendment because I believe that sneaking deceptive policy riders into appropriations legislation is not the proper way to create policy and govern this great nation.

I have the privilege of representing Memphis, Tennessee, which was inundated this year with historic floods. There is no doubt in my mind that these floods were exacerbated by climate change which caused record snowfalls and rainfalls across the Midwest that resulted in the record flooding. As bad as these floods were, the impacts would have been magnitudes worse had it not been for the Army Corps of Engineers' tremendous work to control the flood. I strongly support the Army Corps and appreciate their efforts to safeguard the American people and economy.

## HONORING SETH BARTON

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2011*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Seth Barton. Seth is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Seth has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Seth has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Seth has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Seth Barton for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN TRIBUTE OF MS. KATHLEEN LEDWIDGE AND MR. WALTER JOHNSEN

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2011*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my sincerest congratulations to Ms. Kathleen Ledwidge and Mr. Walter Johnsen, who brought home the silver medals last Thursday from the Special Olympics World Games in Greece. Connecticut's Second District is honored to recognize the extraordinary sailors, Kathleen and Walter, who hail from Mystic and Stonington, respectively.

The very first time Walter and Kathleen sailed together was at the Special Olympic Games in Athens this year. Walter, who is only 15 years old, was partnered with Kathleen and they placed second, only points behind a team from Austria. While this may have been their first opportunity to sail together, these two have become lifelong friends who will sail the waters of the world for years to come.

Spike Lobdell, President of the Stonington Harbor Yacht Club Sailing Club, said that every Tuesday afternoon, Walter, Kathy, and many other athletes attend training where their lessons not only improve their sailing skills but also their lives. He said that their goal is to teach life skills and that beyond their silver medals in the top bracket, "Kathy and Walter are even more impressive off the water."

As we know, the Special Olympics began its remarkable tradition more than forty years ago when founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver recited the oath that is still said today: "Let me win, but if I cannot win let me be brave in the attempt." Since those sacred words were first spoken, 3.1 million athletes from 185 countries have participated in the Games, including the 12,000 who participated in Greece this year.

It is inspiring to witness such talent from individuals in Connecticut. It takes significant courage to represent your State and your country and I would like to commend them and their fellow athletes for their bravery. The Special Olympics will always serve as a reminder of the importance of giving everyone a chance to be themselves in a world where it is sometimes difficult to do so.

As President Barack Obama recently said, the "Special Olympics, as a champion for people with intellectual disabilities, teaches our nation—and our world—that no physical or mental barrier can restrain the power of the human spirit." We have seen that spirit in the accomplishments of these two sailors. I ask that my colleagues join me in offering our sincerest congratulations to our brave and talented athletes, Ms. Kathleen Ledwidge and Mr. Walter Johnsen.

## HONORING SPENCER HARTLEY

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2011*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Spencer Hartley. Spencer is a very special young man who has

exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Spencer has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Spencer has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Spencer has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Spencer Hartley for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

## CONDEMNING RECENT VOTER SUPPRESSION LEGISLATION

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2011*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on May 19, Florida Governor Rick Scott signed into law an egregious Republican bill attacking from all angles one of the most fundamental rights of our democracy: the right to vote.

The transgressions contained in this bill are not minor inconveniences but elements of a systematic attack against the voting rights of minorities both in Florida and across the country.

In fact, since the adoption of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the Department of Justice has overturned a total of 428 separate laws across the country for unconstitutionally infringing on the voting rights of minorities. Governor Scott's law needs to be number 429.

The bill that Governor Scott and Florida Republicans have forced into law is nothing more than a backdoor poll tax. It limits access to the polls for minorities, seniors, and college students. It reduces the number of early voting days and imposes new restrictive regulations on voter registration groups.

With this bill, Governor Scott and the Republicans have sold out the most basic rights of Florida's voters in a brazen act of political gamesmanship reminiscent of Reconstruction.

Fortunately, DOJ is finally now reviewing the law after Republicans refused to submit their bill for preclearance. A number of groups, including the League of Women Voters and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), sent a letter to Secretary of State Kurt Browning opposing the law.

The ACLU and Project Vote Smart have also filed a lawsuit under the Voting Rights Act to prevent implementation of these new rules. It is my hope that soon we can end the affront that is this discriminatory law.

We cannot sit idly by and let Governor Scott and his cronies in the Republican-led legislature turn back the clock on 40 years of progress just to create an advantage for themselves on Election Day.

It is the voters of Florida who stand to lose the most from this law, Mr. Speaker.

We have not come this far only to have Republicans maliciously undermine our fundamental rights as Americans. When the rights of Americans are trampled and discarded with nothing more than a shrug, it must not go overlooked.