

Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,615,726,037,322.66. We've added \$4,988,848,988,409.58 to our debt in 3 years. This is debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING DREW LISCUM

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Drew Liscum is a senior at Kempner High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

People as a whole seem to receive adequate information about what the government actually does in a very unique way. The reason being is that the government, in about every country, controls what is seen and what is not seen. They control key aspects to people's lives. I believe in the truth . . . whether it hurts me or not.

For instance, why is it said nationwide and even worldwide, that politicians are "liars." Well maybe it's because they are simply talented at hiding the blunt truth. When a friend asks for an opinion about their hair or if they look good, it's ok to throw in a white lie to not hurt their feelings. But when you lie to your country, it's different on so many levels. I'm not saying that our government lies, but I'm not saying that they tell the truth either. People refer to government as a system for the way it works. If you're in the government, your punishments are much less crucial than that of an average citizen. For example, a man named Michael Lund was arrested on October 28th, 2011 for driving while intoxicated. He was trying to cut through a blocked off accident scene a little after eleven-thirty. Michael Lund is the captain of the Sugar Land Police Department. The men that arrested him were Stafford Policemen. The same types of charges were also given to a dear friend of mine. His charges were not withheld or cut back. The point is that the government should be equal in every aspect. Whether it's a case or the truth being put forward, everyone should know the same and be treated the same.

In the documentary, "Dear Zachary," a man, Andrew Bagby, was killed in 2001 after breaking up with his girlfriend. After she denied murdering him to several cops and people, she moved to Canada. Bagby's family still pressed charges against her, but now it was a little more difficult. Shortly after living in Canada, she announced herself to be Pregnant. Andrews parents now became a bigger part of the picture. They wanted to gain custody of Zachary. On August 18th, Shirley Turner takes her son, Zacahary, far out into the middle of the ocean and drowns

the both of them. On December 15th, 2010, Governor General David Johnston gave Royal Assent to Bill C-464: An Act To Amend the Criminal Code, making it law in Canada. The bill has added an amendment to Canada's criminal code giving courts the right to refuse bail to someone charged with a serious crime who is deemed a potential danger to children under the age of 18.

The argument on what role the government should play in our lives will go on forever. The problem is that they need to be there for us when we need them, and also know when to step down and let us live our own lives. People such as Shirley Turner should be taken care of here in America while she is extremely dangerous and all evidence is pointing towards her. The government needs to understand to play their own role before they decide to play it in ours.

HONORING MR. HEZEKIAH WATKINS FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary civil rights activist, Mr. Hezekiah Watkins. Mr. Watkins is a lifelong resident of Jackson, Mississippi. He graduated from Lanier High School and continued his education at Utica Junior College, Southern Illinois University and East Tennessee State University.

Mr. Watkins became a lifelong proponent of justice after his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1961, the "Freedom Fighters" banned together in Jackson, Mississippi to demonstrate against state segregation laws, and for doing so, 328 people were arrested with the charge "breach of peace." At the age of 13, Mr. Watkins was the youngest to be arrested and sent to Parchman Prison during the Freedom Riders movement. He continued his involvement in Mississippi's fight for civil rights, and as a result was arrested over 100 times more in years to follow. These experiences caused him to commit to improving the quality of life and opportunities for young African American youth and all of mankind.

Mr. Watkins began his career as a young entrepreneur and took on full time employment with Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health Center and Hinds County Human Recourses Agency.

He is currently employed with the Jackson Medical Mall and owner of the Corner Food Market and Deli in Jackson, Mississippi. Mr. Watkins continues his activism for justice as a community leader who promotes community and civic involvement in Mississippi's African American youth.

Mr. Watkins has been married for the past 23 years to the former Chris Tanner. Together, they delight in the joys of three children, Marvin, Quentin, and Kristi. They also have four grandchildren, Quentin II, Brandon, Corey and Mason.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Hezekiah Watkins for his dedication and service as a Civil Rights advocate and pioneer during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

HONORING THE SOCIETY OF SANTA MARIA MADDALENA SOCIETY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me the greatest pleasure to rise today to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the Society of Santa Maria Maddalena of New Haven—the oldest American fraternal organization in Connecticut—for their many invaluable contributions to our community.

Located in Wooster Square, the neighborhood in New Haven where I grew up, the Society of Maria Maddalena has played an important role in forging the strong bonds of our community. Founded in 1898 by immigrants from the town of Atrani in the Salerno Province, south of Naples, Italy, the Society of Maria Maddalena has been a resource for neighborhood families for generations. Named for the patron saint of Atrani, the Society of Maria Maddalena was originally established to assist fellow Atrani immigrants with housing, employment, English translating, and legal matters. It was a place where families faced with the many challenges of starting a new life in a new country could turn for support, comfort, and friendship. Over the years, the Society's purpose has become more community oriented, helping any worthwhile cause or individual regardless of ethnic background. It has donated tens of thousands of dollars to numerous charities and organizations in New Haven and across the State. St. Michael's Church in New Haven, the Salvation Army, Columbus House, Connecticut Hospice, and two Jima Survivors are just a few of those organizations who have benefitted from their generosity. The Society has also provided scholarships to inner city youths.

The Santa Maria Maddalena Society preserves the traditions, heritage and culture of its members' ancestors, and also maintains ties to Atrani by providing assistance to the Santa Maria Maddalena Church in Italy and the society's Italian sister organization for its annual Festa to Santa Maria Maddalena which coincides with the feast day in Connecticut. During the week of July 22, a replica of the original statue of the saint, which was brought to the United States in 1914, is carried through the streets of Wooster Square. The saint is adorned with jewelry provided by the original members of the society. The feast procession culminates at St. Michael's Catholic Church where a high mass is celebrated. The feast celebration extends for four days with Italian music and food, and on Saturday evening, Neapolitan music is featured. The holiday is a time for reuniting with friends and providing younger generations with opportunities to learn about their culture.

People across the country struggle to create a sense of community—a sense of belonging. Over the course of its one hundred-fourteen-year history, the Society of Maria Maddalena has helped the families of Wooster Square do just that. For their many invaluable contributions as well as their continued support and friendship, I am proud to stand today to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the members, past and present, of the Society of Maria Maddalena. The bonds of community