

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY
OF PORTAGE, MICHIGAN

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the City of Portage, Michigan—A Natural Place to Move.

On February 18, 1963, residents of Portage Township voted 3,762 to 2,315 in favor of becoming a city. On December 31, 1963, the City of Portage was formally incorporated. From just over 20,000 residents in 1963, Portage is now home to over 46,000. Historically, Portage grew as a crossroads for traders in the 19th century and benefitted from fertile farmland and abundant natural resources.

Today, Portage is a vibrant community with affordable, safe housing in well-maintained neighborhoods; hundreds of successful commercial and industrial businesses; and is the retail crossroads of southwest Michigan. This strong, diverse community is family-focused and proudly boasts over 2,000 acres of park and recreational space, 56 miles of bikeways, three nature preserves and seven lakes that connect its citizens and visitors to each other and the natural world.

The City of Portage is a robust community that excels with an accredited public safety department, low tax rate, accredited senior citizen center, comprehensive and efficient city services, diverse employment opportunities, an excellent public school system, award-winning district library and world-class healthcare that together facilitate an economic climate that allows Portage residents to thrive. Quite simply, it is a great place to live, work, and play.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the City of Portage and applaud the city on its 50th anniversary. A momentous milestone for a remarkable community.

HONORING ADAM E. COCKRIEL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Adam E. Cockriel. Adam 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 351, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Adam has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Adam 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, Adam has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

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

BELLAIRE HIGH SCHOOL YOUNG
REPUBLICANS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last November, we once again witnessed a remarkably low turn-out among this nation's youth. Sadly, the majority of the youngest demographic group, our nation's future, Republican and Democrat alike, failed to take part in the democratic process. I met a group of young high school students trying to buck that trend.

The Bellaire High School Young Republicans, led by Michelle Knesbach, Jennifer Knesbach, and Michael Scheinthal, push to create a spirit of activism at their high school, in the city of Houston, and around the state of Texas. At the age of fourteen, these three students began working on local campaigns, block walking on weekends and helping fundraise on school nights. Soon after, the three started the High School Republicans of Texas, an official auxiliary of the state party which focuses on giving a voice to those too young to vote, and encourages activism among their schoolmates. Through voter registration drives and get out the vote campaigns in their community, the Bellaire High School Republicans engage young people in the political process, making a difference on Election Day.

I met this group at a dinner I spoke at and was impressed by their initiative. I was invited to speak at their school, and when I walked into the building, taking me back to the days of too much homework and pop quizzes, I was surprised that around 300 students came to the event during their lunch break. We had a discussion, about Hamas, about drug cartels, about policy and bipartisanship, topics that I often find bore people twice their age; yet they were intrigued. An age group, often overlooked, often deemed to not care, was just as fascinated, cared just as much, about these vital topics as anyone. The Bellaire Young Republicans and the High School Republicans of Texas are changing the status quo by inspiring their classmates to avoid being a part of another disappointing statistic.

Campaign events of the future will be full of young faces. Students too young to vote learn that they can make a difference, impact their state, and impact their country. Further merit should be credited to the Bellaire Young Republicans as they fight for ideas that are widely rejected by their peers as they work to end the "youth involvement drought" slowly eroding the Republican Party and the Conservative Movement. Looking into the young crowd, I knew there was hope for my party and for my country.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to reintroduce legislation that would reestablish the

legal public holiday for Washington's Birthday from the third Monday of February to the actual date of George Washington's birth on February 22.

I have long admired President Washington and have found inspiration in public service from studying his life. Unfortunately, I have found that students today have a dearth of knowledge about our nation's beginnings and the man from Virginia who led the colonies to form the union known as the United States of America.

In 2011, two-time Pulitzer Prize winning history author David McCullough observed, "We're raising young people who are, by and large, historically illiterate." How can we adequately explain the importance of George Washington to our children when we do not even take time to recognize his actual birthday? We must reestablish Washington's Birthday on the 22nd to honor his legacy and in doing so call upon schools across the nation to focus on Washington as the soldier, legislator and president who shepherded our young nation through war, political turmoil, rebellion and expansion as no other single individual was capable of doing.

I believe Congress has unwittingly contributed to this lack of historical understanding by relegating Washington's Birthday to the third Monday of February to take advantage of a three-day weekend. We need to change the focus from celebrating sales at the mall to celebrating the significance of President Washington's birth to the birth of our nation.

There is a reason the birthday of President George Washington is the only legal federal holiday observed for a president of the United States. He is called the "father of our country" because he is without compare in our nation's history.

Washington's Birthday has been celebrated since the final days of the Revolutionary War. French and American troops paraded through Newport, Rhode Island, in 1781 and celebrations were held in Richmond, Virginia, in 1782. Organized by French General Rochambeau and others who knew him personally, these celebrations drew special attention to the bravery, courage, leadership and perseverance of the Revolutionary War hero.

From the beginning of our country, the importance of this day has been recognized. As President James Buchanan said in 1860, ". . . when the birthday of Washington shall be forgotten, liberty will have perished from the earth." In response, President Rutherford B. Hayes signed legislation in 1879 that made Washington's Birthday a holiday for District federal workers. The holiday was extended to all federal workers in 1885.

This legislation I reintroduce today is not without precedent. In 1975, Congress amended the Uniform Monday Holiday Act and President Gerald R. Ford signed legislation into law returning the annual observance of Veterans Day from the fourth Monday in November to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978.

The Uniform Holiday Bill signed in 1968 and effective in 1971 was intended to ensure three-day weekends for federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Columbus Day. Originally called Armistice Day to mark the signing of an Armistice on the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month in 1918 that ended World War