

he will study Business Administration and play for the Men's Lacrosse team.

Andrew's achievements set a wonderful example for his peers around him, and I am confident he will have continued success. I wish him the best of luck in all his endeavors, both on and off the field. Mr. Speaker, I ask those present today to join me in honoring Andrew Reid Bryan.

PEACE FOR THAILAND

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at 1.8 million people, Thailand is home to the third largest ethnic Malay population in the world. Since 2004, extremists in the country have been fighting the government for an independent state for the ethnic group. This has been one of the bloodiest conflicts in Southeast Asia and has left nearly 5,000 people dead.

According to the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, in the past four years alone, more than 1,400 people have died and 3,200 have been wounded. The violence has killed indiscriminately. Fatalities have included soldiers, policemen, village leaders, monks, teachers, and innocent civilians. While most of those killed were the victims of shootings, there have also been nearly 600 improvised explosive device attacks and 40 beheadings since January 2009.

Thankfully, it is possible this cycle of violence could be coming to an end.

With the help of Malaysian mediators, the chairman of the Thai National Security Council and a representative of one of the Malay separatist groups active in the region, Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), signed an agreement in February to formally begin peace talks. Reports indicate former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's started talks behind the scenes years ago that helped lead to this milestone agreement. He should be commended for those efforts.

Public peace talks between the government and the rebels will be a big step forward in solving the conflict in southern Thailand. While previous attempts have been made, this marks the first time that both sides have agreed in writing to hold talks.

Mr. Speaker, the progress that is slowly being achieved in southern Thailand is significant, and we should hope that it continues until there is lasting peace throughout the country. And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING THE ROTARY CLUB OF NORTH CHICAGO AND THEIR 2013 HUMANITARIAN PATRIOT HONOREES

HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the outstanding community service of the Rotary Club of North Chicago and to recognize this year's recipients of their Humanitarian Patriot Award.

Each year the Rotary Club in North Chicago, home of Naval Station Great Lakes, recognizes their Humanitarian Patriot honorees for their service to veterans. This year's recipients have all demonstrated an incredible sense of commitment to the men and women of our armed forces. They understand that veterans have sacrificed greatly for this country and deserve nothing but our highest gratitude and respect.

The Rotary Club was founded on the principle of service, and the Humanitarian Patriot Award is an inspiring extension of that original mission.

It is entirely fitting that this year's ceremony will be held at the Lovell Federal Health Care Center—an institution dedicated to caring for the brave members of our armed forces, veterans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate this year's recipients: Alan Belcher; Ken Duffy; Patricia Jones; Alain H. Oller, Donna E. King; Tom Marks; John Mrocza; the Navy League of the United States, Lake County Council; Paula Caraballido; William R. Beiersdorf; Gregory Padovani; Eli Williamson; Thomas Zengeler; and Jim Dolan.

But much more than that, I thank them for the incredible work they have done. Their service strengthens our communities, and I am grateful for the work of the Rotary Club of North Chicago and all of this year's honorees.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF ARLENE BILLAK

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the extraordinary life of my friend and supporter Arlene Billak who sadly passed away on April 21, 2013. Arlene was born January 13, 1949, in Sharon, Pennsylvania to her loving parents Stan and Marie Izenas. Arlene was a graduate of Sharon High School and retired from State Farm Insurance as an office manager.

Arlene was a devoted wife and mother who provided constant love and support and was always willing to sacrifice her all for her family. Arlene was a woman of strength and humility who never refused to give up after being diagnosed with cancer. She courageously fought until her final days, always making sure that she had a smile on her face. Her loving heart and spirit will continue to be felt everyday by those who loved her and those she loved.

I would like to extend my deepest and heartfelt sympathies to Arlene Billak's family: her husband Rick, her son Damian, her two brothers Paul and Bob Izenas, and her two sisters Kathy and Irene. Rest assured the love and devotion she had for her family and friends will never be forgotten.

I have known Arlene and Rick for many years. They have been active in politics for decades. They were always there to support and push their candidates and those issues that improve the quality of life for those who have the least. Arlene believed that politics could make a positive difference in people's lives, and she showed us all how one person can make a difference. I will always remember the example she set and how she constantly

shared her upbeat and positive demeanor with the world. Our community, and all that knew her, are better because we crossed paths with Arlene Billak.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM BRIDENSTINE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House of Representatives that on May 21, 2013, I was unable to participate in three recorded votes due to my participation, along with the entire Oklahoma delegation, in a tour of tornado affected areas in and around Moore, Oklahoma.

I wish to submit for the record a summary of these bills, as well as statement on how I would have voted on each had I been present. I would also like to note that these are the only votes I have missed so far as a Member of Congress.

H.R. 1412, the Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013, passed the House by a vote of 416-0. Had I been present, I would have voted for H.R. 1412. The bill incentivizes private sector companies to participate in Veterans Administration (VA) on-the-job-training (OJT) training programs by reducing the level of employer contributions. It also requires the VA to enter into OJT agreements with other federal departments and agencies, which will encourage the federal government to hire veterans by fully leveraging available authorities. Finally, H.R. 1412 offsets any additional costs by extending for one month the VA's authority to pay reduced pensions to veterans using Medicaid-approved nursing facilities. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), H.R. 1412 would reduce direct spending about \$14 million from FY14-FY18 and produce an "insignificant effect on discretionary spending."

H.R. 1344, the Helping Heroes Fly Act, passed the House by a vote of 413-0. Had I been present, I would have voted for this bill. H.R. 1344 directs the Department of Defense to develop processes to expedite airport screening for severely injured and disabled service members and veterans.

H.R. 324, to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II, passed the House by a vote of 415-0. I co-sponsored this bill and I would have voted for it had I been present. The bill authorizes two Congressional Gold Medals for the First Special Service Force, a joint Canadian-U.S. special operations unit that served with distinction during WWII. The First Special Service Force was the precursor unit for both the U.S. and Canadian Special Operations forces.

IN RECOGNITION OF EXERCISE IS MEDICINE MONTH

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Exercise is Medicine Month.