

continue to experience many great memories with your lovely wife, Linda, as well as your family and friends.

HONORING DR. CHARLES A.  
PICKETT, SR.

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**  
OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 13, 2013*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a once outstanding civil servant and educator, Dr. Charles A. Pickett, Sr. His remarkable service to education and the community spanned over 45 years.

Dr. Pickett, Sr. was born January 16, 1938 to Mr. William D. Pickett and Mrs. Willie C. Flowers Pickett in Miles Station, Mississippi. He obtained his high school education from Jim Hill High School in Jackson, Mississippi and pursued his collegiate studies at Tougaloo College, Temple University, and the University of Southern Mississippi. Even in accomplishing such magnificent educational achievements, Dr. Pickett, Sr. pressed forward with additional studies at Brown University and Columbia University. His appointment as a National Science Foundation Physics Fellow awarded him the opportunity to work at nationally renowned universities, such as Fisk University, Texas Southern University, Louisiana State University, and Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Having obtained a wealth of knowledge and expertise, Dr. Pickett, Sr. was uniquely prepared to pursue the lasting career he ultimately dedicated his life's work towards.

Dr. Pickett, Sr. began his lifelong commitment to education as a teacher of mathematics and physics at Hinds County Agricultural High School in Utica, Mississippi. His exceptional prowess in those subject areas paved the way for him to teach at numerous other institutions, including: Utica Junior College, Alcorn State University, Louisiana State University, Jackson State University, and Mississippi Valley State University, where he was appointed Chairman of the Department of Chemistry and Physics.

Not only was Dr. Pickett, Sr. an outstanding teacher, but also a strong advocate for increasing the number and quality of physics courses offered at historically black colleges and universities. His advocacy was instrumental in implementing these changes, as well as enhancing the availability of physics laboratory equipment.

In addition to his valuable contributions to academics, Dr. Pickett, Sr. held key offices on the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), including Associate Commissioner of Academic Affairs and Interim Commissioner, solidifying him as the first African American professional to serve in either of these positions. Even after his retirement, Dr. Pickett, Sr. continued to provide valuable input to IHL as a consultant.

Dr. Pickett, Sr. was well-known in the community, not only for his professional contributions, but also for his dedication to his family and leisure enjoyments. He was a devoted husband to Marie Wilcher for 44 years and a committed father of two sons, Charles, Jr. and Dwayne. He was a member of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, the Terry

Cowboys Riding Club, Sigma Pi Sigma Honorary Physics Society, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. Dr. Pickett, Sr. transcended this life on earth on January 17, 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Charles A. Pickett, Sr. for his dedication and service as a respected educator and for the commendable contributions he made to the field of public education.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY  
OF MARY JOHNSON

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 13, 2013*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life of Mary Johnson, who passed away on June 7, 2013 at the age of 87. Mrs. Johnson, a fixture of Buffalo's Ellicott community, was a pioneering activist whose life was an unwavering crusade for the betterment of others.

Mrs. Johnson was truly adored by her neighbors as a tireless advocate for the less fortunate. A nearly lifelong resident of the Frederick Douglass Housing complex, Mrs. Johnson was a fearless force dedicated to improving public housing in the community for more than fifty years. In 2001, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority recognized her spirited volunteerism with the dedication of Mary Johnson Boulevard on Buffalo's East Side.

An active, steady force for change, Mrs. Johnson gave her time and talents to myriad organizations focused on community advancement. She served on the board of directors of the Community Action Organization and was a member of the JFK Community Center, Urban League Education Auxiliary Group, AMVETS Auxiliary Post 5, Ellicott Neighborhood Advisory Council, and the YMCA Heart of the Home Club. Her tenure with the Buffalo Urban League alone spanned over twenty three years.

Mrs. Johnson was an unselfish champion for her community and will be remembered as a lasting role model for those graced with her acquaintance. Her enduring contributions have made Buffalo a better city for generations to come.

The love Mrs. Johnson poured into her community is equaled by her love of family. The wife of the late, great Billy Johnson, this caring mother is survived by her son, George Jr., and six daughters, Jean Ann Robinson, Estelle Arlene Blue, Catherine Lee Watkins, Virginia Beard, Anna Mae Hoskin, and Mary Harris.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a moment to remember the life of this remarkable woman. I ask my colleagues to join me in offering our sincere condolences to her family. I am grateful for her innumerable good works and inspired by her legacy.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. ALAN GRAYSON**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 5, 2013*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2217) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes:

INTENT OF CONGRESS REGARDING "FUSION CENTERS"

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chair, according to the Constitution Project, there are at least 77 fusion centers active in the United States today. Fusion centers are essentially information-sharing hubs designed to pool the knowledge and expertise of state, local and federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and, in some instances, other government agencies, military officials and private sector entities. They operate primarily on state funding, though they generally receive federal funds and work closely with federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ). As a general matter, fusion centers are not established pursuant to specific state legislation or state executive orders, but rather derive their authority from general statutes creating state police agencies or memoranda of understanding among partner agencies. Many fusion centers simply represent extensions of existing intelligence units in state law enforcement agencies.

Congress shares the serious constitutional concerns that have been raised after several fusion centers issued bulletins that characterize a wide variety of peaceful religious and political groups as threats to national security. In some instances, state law enforcement agencies that funnel information to fusion centers have improperly monitored and infiltrated anti-war and environmental organizations. Moreover, the manner in which fusion centers amass and distribute personal information raises the concern that they are keeping files—perhaps containing information that is sensitive or concerns constitutionally protected activities—on American citizens in the United States without proper justification. With the interconnected system employed by fusion centers, even those with the best civil liberties practices can inadvertently perpetuate or exacerbate the problematic activities of other fusion centers or law enforcement agencies. The breadth of the fusion center network also means that inaccurate or problematic information can be distributed widely across government databases, and perhaps even to private businesses, with potentially disastrous consequences for the constitutional rights of individuals. Finally, without proper safeguards, links between fusion centers in different states might allow "forum-shopping" law enforcement officials to evade the privacy and domestic surveillance restrictions of their own states by accessing information obtained by fusion centers in other jurisdictions. All of these risks are potentially compounded by the limited transparency and accountability of these institutions.

Recent reports from across the country bear testament to the potential for constitutionally