

DAKOTA TURNER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 10, 2014

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Dakota Turner for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Dakota Turner is a 12th grader at Arvada High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Dakota Turner is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Dakota Turner for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 10, 2014

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize passage of several pieces of legislation as well as to voice strong opposition to another bill for recorded votes during the week of March 3, 2014. Unfortunately, I was not able to vote for final passage of these bills because I was out on medical leave recovering from much needed hip replacement surgery.

H.R. 3370, the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act, is poorly crafted legislation that will make an already insolvent program worse. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is currently \$24 billion in debt. This legislation will continue the federal governments failed involvement in administering flood insurance. H.R. 3370 undoes important reforms that were just passed in 2012 and were our only hope in making this terrible program sustainable. When it became clear the House did not have the votes to pass this legislation last week, the bill almost tripled in size over the weekend and came back a worse bill than even the Senate version in order to get enough Democrats to support these piece of junk. I strongly oppose this wasteful and inefficient bill.

H.R. 938, the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014, recognizes the importance of Israel as our closest ally and allows for new partnerships in relation to cyber-security, economic prosperity and defense. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation.

H.R. 4118, the Suspending the Individual Mandate Penalty Law Equals Fairness Act, is legislation that seeks to delay Obamacare's individual mandate by one year. This bill would bring parity for the American people as President Obama has twice suspended the employer mandate for businesses. Obamacare is a train wreck. The President should not selec-

tively choose by executive order what parts of this terrible law to enforce. If the President thinks this law is good enough for the American people then it should be good enough for his cronies and everyone else. I will continue to fight to repeal and replace Obamacare.

H.R. 2126, the Energy Efficiency Improvements Act, is a bill that will assist with increasing energy efficiency throughout commercial buildings.

H.R. 3826, the Electricity Security and Affordability Act, seeks to reinstate economic sanity to EPA proposed regulations and give Congress a role in the process. This legislation allows the EPA to propose regulations for existing American power plants, but requires Congressional approval before they can take effect. More importantly, it will prohibit the mandate for CSS technology for new power plants until it is viable and has been tested at a few select power plants around the country. This Administration has waged a war on coal and I'm proud to be a cosponsor of this critical bill that pushes back against this overreach by the EPA.

H.R. 2641, the Responsibly and Professionally Invigorating Development Act, is important legislation that streamlines the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to allow for a more timely completion of construction projects. This bill will create jobs and allow for projects that are critical to our economy to move forward.

H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine, would add Ukraine to the list of countries eligible for loan guarantees from the state department. This legislation seeks to undermine Mr. Putin's atrocious behavior and support the Ukraine interim government. This bill does not require any new appropriations, but merely adds Ukraine to a list of nations eligible for State Department monies. I personally condemn the actions of Russia, and I am hopeful this crisis is resolved soon for the Ukrainian people.

Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted in support of these important bills with a yea vote on roll call numbers 95, 97, 98, 106, 113 and 114.

Additionally, I would have opposed the dangerous flood insurance reform bill with a nay vote on roll call number 91.

DANIEL ZHURBA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 10, 2014

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Daniel Zhurba for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Daniel Zhurba is a 12th grader at Arvada West High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Daniel Zhurba is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Daniel Zhurba for winning the Arvada Wheat

Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

COMMENDING THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S 'SMART ON CRIME INITIATIVE'

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 10, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, last August, at the direction of the Attorney General Eric Holder, the Justice Department launched the "Smart on Crime" initiative, a set of internal policies and reforms to ensure federal laws are enforced more fairly and efficiently. These reforms are consistent with the President's constitutional obligation to take care that the laws are faithfully executed.

One of the smart reforms is a modification in the department's charging policies so that certain low-level, nonviolent drug defendants, with no significant ties to large-scale organizations, gangs, or cartels, will no longer be charged with offenses triggering mandatory minimum sentences. Instead, they will be charged with offenses that allow judges to impose sentences appropriate to their conduct.

The "Smart on Crime" initiative is an exciting development that should be welcomed and supported by everyone because the status quo simply was not making the criminal justice system better, it was creating more problems than it solved. And we are spending more than \$6.5 billion annually to incarcerate inmates, money that could be better used to fund job training, and educational opportunities, invest in infrastructure, support veterans, and promote reentry programs to reduce recidivism.

Thirty years ago, there were less than 30,000 inmates in the federal system; today, there are nearly 216,000, an increase of 800 percent. The United States incarcerates nearly 25 percent of the world's inmates, even though it only has 5 percent of the world's population. No other country imprisons a larger percentage of its population than the United States or spends anywhere near the amount we do to incarcerate our citizens.

The cost of imprisoning so many non-violent offenders is fiscally unsustainable and morally unjustifiable and it will take the combined efforts of policy makers, reform advocates, legal professionals, and private citizens to solve the problem.

There is no shortage of stories chronicling the damage done to the lives of thousands of individuals and their families by the draconian sentencing laws passed by Congress and state legislatures beginning in the late 1980s in the so-called "War on Drugs." Few are as tragic as the story of Clarence Aaron, who grew up in a public housing project in Mobile, Alabama.

In 1992, shortly after his grandfather's death, Clarence made a mistake that would change his life. He agreed to introduce an old high school football teammate to a college classmate whose brother was a drug dealer. Clarence was present during one of the brother's drug transactions and during another attempted transaction for which he received \$1,500.