

cope with climate change, natural disasters, and security challenges.

Beyond Ambassador Mozena's current posting in Dhaka, he had an impressive career advancing U.S. interests in South Asia and Africa. He previously served in Bangladesh as Political/Economic Counselor from 1998–2001 and as a Deputy Political Counselor in India and Pakistan. A member of Senior Foreign Service, Mozena was U.S. Ambassador to Angola from 2007–2010 and previously worked in the Office of Southern African Affairs from 1993 to 1995, during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Previous postings include Lusaka and Kinshasa and a year as a professor at the National War College.

Ambassador Mozena's family has stood by his side as he has pursued his career overseas. His wife of 40 years, Grace, is a retired elementary school teacher who served with him as a Peace Corps volunteer in then-Zaire. Their two children, Anne and Mark, followed their father throughout the world. I understand that Mozena also looks forward to spending time with the newest addition to his family, a granddaughter named Mira, as well as his mother Edna.

As Ambassador Mozena returns to his family in the United States, we recognize his work in Bangladesh and throughout his career as a Foreign Service Officer.

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TURNS 226

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week 226 years ago, the first presidential election in United States history was held across the 13 original colonies. Nowadays things change in the blink of an eye, so one can imagine how much our country has changed in 226 years.

Texas was still a part of the Spanish Empire in 1789 and the United States had just recently gained its independence from the British Empire. Back then, voting eligible citizens would walk or ride their horses down cobblestone roads to the nearest poll.

Oddly enough, the first voters voted by voice, rather than the secret ballot that we're all used to now. Voters wouldn't even vote for who they wanted as President, but would actually vote for their state's electors. The chosen electors would then cast their vote for President. Though we still have electors, citizens now vote for who they believe should be President rather than their state's electors. Electors are instead chosen by state governments and then each one is expected to vote with the will of the people of their state. The Electoral College voting system has been one of the lone constants in an ever-changing political and voting landscape. It was used in the first Presidential election and has been used in every election since.

While the Electoral College has remained in place since 1789, voting rights have changed significantly over the years. For the first Presidential election, an eligible voter was defined as any white, land-owning male. However, our country has progressed a great deal since then and now defines an eligible voter as any citizen over the age of 18, regardless of race, gender, or societal status.

We should be proud to live in a country whose government recognizes everyone as equal and allows each individual to vote, regardless of race or gender. From 13 colonies to 50 states and from voting by voice to voting on touch-screen computers, our elections have come a long way since 1789, and I expect the next 226 years to be just as great.

And that's just the way it is.

IN HONOR OF PETER CHACON

### HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Peter Chacon for a lifetime of selfless service and leadership to our nation and our community. He served honorably in the United States Air Force during World War II and in the California State legislature for over 20 years.

Born in Phoenix, Arizona, Mr. Chacon was raised in a home of modest means with three older sisters and three younger brothers. As a teenager, he would shine shoes and park cars in downtown Phoenix to help support his family. His father, Petronilo Chacon, served as a commander in Mexico to Pancho Villa's revolutionary Army and taught Mr. Chacon to fight for what he believed in with passion and determination, while defending the rights of those who could not do the same.

In 1943, at the age of 18 and in the midst of World War II, Mr. Chacon enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He served honorably for two years of wartime service as a Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress. During his service, he flew 35 successful missions over Germany. On one such mission, his plane was shot down and forced to crash land on a small island off the Italian coast where he and the rest of the crew were later rescued.

After the war, Mr. Chacon returned home as a hero and enrolled in San Diego City College and later San Diego State University where he received a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in school administration. He began a career as a teacher, where he discovered injustices facing Spanish speaking children in schools. In 1968, with the help of two friends, Mr. Chacon founded the Chicano Federation in an effort to unite the Latino voice in the San Diego community. One of the first accomplishments of the Chicano Federation was the creation of the historic Chicano Park in the Barrio Logan community. Chicano Park has come to be an important symbol of the Chicano Movement.

In 1969, Mr. Chacon decided to run for the California State Assembly in an effort to change the education system from within. Mr. Chacon was elected in 1970 to represent California's 79th assembly district, where he served for 22 years. He is best known for authoring legislation to create the California Housing Finance Agency, the Rural Housing Development Program, and the landmark Bilingual/Bicultural Education Program for the more than 230,000 limited English speaking students in the state.

Mr. Chacon was an inspirational leader in the San Diego community and his contributions will not be forgotten. He is survived by his four sons, Chris, Paul, Ralph and Jeff.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF KAREN WILKINSON

### HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today, as Ranking Member and former Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, I join with my colleague, Rep. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, the former Chairman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, in celebrating the life and recognizing the accomplishments of Karen Wilkinson, who sadly passed away on January 5.

Karen was a dedicated public servant, highly valued counsel to the Committee, and beloved colleague.

We were fortunate to get to know Karen through her work for the Committee in 2008 and 2009. During that time, Karen, an Assistant Federal Public Defender, was a detailee from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. Her detail was the first of a Federal Public Defender to Congress. After her work with the Committee, she returned to Phoenix, Arizona to continue representing indigent clients in federal criminal cases, which she had done for eight years before coming to the Committee. Prior to that, she clerked for the U.S. District Court for Arizona and then joined the law firm of Brown & Bain. Karen graduated magna cum laude from Arizona State University Law School, received a Masters in Business Administration from Nova University and her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Michigan.

Karen's accomplishments during her tenure with the Committee include a number of bills that dealt with issues that are very important to improving our country's criminal justice system. During the 111th Congress, she was responsible for guiding several legislative measures to approval on the floor of the House of Representatives, including: H.R. 448, the Elder Abuse Victims Act of 2009; H.R. 632, the National Silver Alert Act 2009; H.R. 748, CAMPUS Safety Act of 2009; H.R. 908, the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program Reauthorization Act of 2009; H.R. 1333, amending chapter 40 of title 18 of the United States Code to exempt the transportation, shipment, receipt, or importation of explosive materials for delivery to a federally recognized Indian tribes; H.R. 1727, the Managing Arson Through Criminal History, MATCH, Act; H.R. 1933, a Child is Missing Alert and Recovery Center Act; S. 1289, the Foreign Evidence Request Efficiency Act of 2009, and H.R. 2661, the Court Security Enhancement Act of 2009.

In addition, she served as lead counsel on several other very important bills under the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee in the 111th Congress, such as: H.R. 503, the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2009; H.R. 2289, the Juvenile Justice Accountability and Improvement Act of 2009; H.R. 2095, the Restitution for the Exonerated Act; H.R. 1149, the Child Protection Reauthorization Act of 2009 and H.R. 1422, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Reauthorization Act of 2009. Karen also developed proposals subsequently introduced as the Literacy Education and Rehabilitation Act, a bill to require a criminal defense representative to be appointed to the

United States Sentencing Commission, the Firearm Recidivist Sentencing Act, and legislation to correct the computation of good time credit in the federal prison system. Her work in developing H.R. 3327, the Ramos-Compean Justice Act of 2009, has led to subsequent bipartisan, bicameral introduction of that bill, now known as the Justice Safety Valve Act. This bill has become one of the critical proposals under consideration as a growing consensus in the country is recognizing the need to reform our sentencing laws in order to achieve greater fairness, save unnecessary costs in the criminal justice system, and reduce recidivism. These bills to reform the criminal justice system, developed through her efforts, are a lasting legacy of her dedication to achieving fairness and justice for all.

Karen's dedication to these issues during her time working for the Committee was representative of the professionalism and commitment she showed as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in representing her clients and vindicating their rights to equal and fair treatment under the law.

Today, we remember and appreciate Karen Wilkinson's dedication to public service, her commitment to fairness, her wise counsel, and the friendships she developed with us and her Judiciary Committee colleagues. We will honor her by pledging to advance the causes that were her life's calling.

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HONORING GENE BESS

**HON. JASON SMITH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gene Bess from Poplar Bluff, Missouri for his exceptional years of service to the community as a basketball coach and mentor.

Coach Gene Bess is considered one of the most winningest college basketball coaches recently gaining his 1,200th win. Coach Gene has been recognized as one of the best coaches in college basketball winning two national junior college championships.

Coach Bess has been named the NJCAA Coach of the Year twice and Regional Coach of the Year 18 times. He has led the Raiders of Three Rivers College to 17 tournament appearances and the program has kept a winning record consistently over .750.

Coach Bess's impressive winning record is only one of the reasons he is such a beloved and respected member of the community. Coach Bess not only strives to motivate his players to do their best on the court, but to keep a clear focus on their future. He has expressed the importance he places on seeing his players continuing their education at other institutions and finishing their degrees.

For his remarkable accomplishments as a college basketball coach and his dedication to serve our community, it is my pleasure to recognize the achievements of Coach Gene Bess before the House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING J. JORGE VERDUZCO

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of J. Jorge Verduzco of Laredo, Texas.

Jorge Verduzco's extraordinary career has been characterized by global citizenship and community service. Before beginning his career, Mr. Verduzco earned a Bachelor's in International Relations from St. Mary's University, a Master's degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University, a second Master's from the American Graduate School on International Management, and he completed graduate programs in Bank Marketing and Commercial Lending.

Jorge Verduzco worked in the Latin American and Administrative Bureaus of the U.S. Department of State for several years prior to joining the International Bank of Commerce in Laredo in 1981. With IBC, Mr. Verduzco has served admirably for over two decades. In addition, his economic development efforts along the Texas-Mexico border have been outstanding, serving as Chairman of the Texas-Mexico Authority Advisory Board, a member of the Policy Board of the Texas Department of Commerce, a founding member of the Border Trade Alliance and the Association of South Texas Communities, a founding Board Member of the Alliance for I-69 Texas, and a Board Member of the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce. His service exemplifies a shining example of humility and dedication.

In addition to his exemplary career, Jorge Verduzco is a committed husband of forty five years, father, grandfather, and author of "International Relations, The Organization of American States."

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize J. Jorge Verduzco for his many accomplishments and great contributions to the Laredo area. I thank you for this time.

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RECOGNIZING MR. RAYMOND BENCIVENGO

**HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today we recognize a career of committed service to our nation and our communities by Raymond Bencivengo of Philadelphia.

Mr. Bencivengo's service began as a United States Marine serving in Vietnam and continued for 25 years after as a Philadelphia Police officer, both on the beat and administratively. Even after retiring from the police force in 1984, Mr. Bencivengo continued his commitment to law, order and protection by serving as a Pennsylvania State Parole Agent for 20 years.

In the summer of 2014, Mr. Bencivengo officially began his well-deserved retirement.

The quiet, selfless service of those like Mr. Bencivengo should never go forgotten or unthanked. So today, I congratulate Raymond

Bencivengo and wish him all the best in his retirement.

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CELEBRATING THE DEDICATION OF THE TINNER HILL HISTORIC SITE

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Fairfax County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and to congratulate the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation on the long-awaited dedication of the Tinner Hill Historic Site.

On January 8, 1915, at the home of Joseph Tinner in Falls Church, nine community leaders formed the Colored Citizens Protective League (CCPL) in order to fight an ordinance in the then Town of Falls Church that would have legalized forced segregation in the town. This pioneering group evolved to become the Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP, which has played an instrumental role in the struggle for civil rights in Fairfax County and the nation for the past 100 years and will continue to do so in its next century.

The Tinner Hill Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit founded by Edwin B. Henderson II, a descendant of E.B. Henderson, the CCPL's first Secretary, to preserve this important piece of our community's history. The Foundation helps prepare tomorrow's leaders by ensuring they understand our community's past through cultural enrichment, arts, career and entrepreneurial education, mentoring, and counseling opportunities and by sponsoring clubs, groups, and organizations. The Foundation also has been engaged in the creation of The Tinner Hill Historic Site, The African American Heritage Walking Tour, The "Dear Editor" Contest, and The Tinner Hill Blues Festival.

I am proud to have partnered with the Foundation since I was the Providence District Supervisor on the Fairfax County Board. It was at a Foundation event like this where we first discussed the idea of preserving this property, and the very next day I worked with my colleagues on the Fairfax Board to direct the County Executive to collaborate with the City of Falls Church to purchase this site, which is so significant to the cultural history of our community. And earlier this year, I was pleased to help capture moving and inspirational stories from some of the Foundation's members as part of the Northern Virginia Civil Rights Archive, which my office assembled in collaboration with the Library of Congress and local library branches.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation on this momentous occasion and commending its members for their steadfast efforts to preserve and promote the legacy of the brave African Americans who established the Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP and for their commitment to advance educational opportunities for students in the community. I also congratulate the Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. Please accept my sincere appreciation for your tireless efforts in support of equal rights and justice for all.