

Mustangs, it is my pleasure to recognize their outstanding season and continued success. This victory and accomplishment is an event that these young ladies will remember for the rest of their lives.

IN RECOGNITION OF ASSISTANT
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
CHARLES LEWIS

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Assistant United States Attorney Charles Lewis and to honor his more than four decades of federal service.

In 1973, Charlie began his career as a law clerk to the Honorable Reynaldo Garza in Brownsville, Texas. After completing his clerkship, he joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas.

Throughout his career, Charlie distinguished himself as a tough and ethical prosecutor who passionately represented the United States in federal court.

Charlie's career included positions as Assistant Director of the Attorney General's Advocacy Institute in charge of training federal prosecutors in criminal prosecutions; Coordinator of the Presidential Drug Taskforce for the states of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi; Coordinator of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Houston division; Resident Legal Advisor to the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, Romania; and Prosecutor Representative for the anti-terrorism advisory committee in Brownsville, Texas.

Charlie's dedication to the prosecution of organized crime and drug trafficking resulted in seizures of tens of millions of dollars of currency and property and the convictions of many large-scale narcotics traffickers and corrupt public officials.

Many of Charlie's cases included investigations in multiple countries across numerous federal investigative agencies, and took years to develop and prosecute. Charlie was particularly good at explaining complex cases to federal juries and applying the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

Charlie is particularly proud of the three years he spent in Bucharest, Romania where he helped reform the Romanian legal system and served as the U.S. representative to the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (now known as the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center) which provides support to member states to combat transnational organized crime and corruption.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to honor Charles Lewis and his more than four decades of public service to the United States. I join my colleagues in Congress in wishing him and Mary, his wife of more than 30 years, the best.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF JEFFREY WILSON ON HIS OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding student from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am pleased to announce that Jeffrey Wilson of Perrysburg, Ohio has been offered an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Jeffrey's offer of appointment poises him to attend the United States Air Force Academy this fall with the incoming Class of 2019. Attending one of our nation's military academies not only offers the opportunity to serve our country but also guarantees a world-class education, while placing demands on those who undertake one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of their lives.

Jeffrey brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming Class of 2019. While attending Lake Local High School in Millbury, Ohio, Jeffrey was a member of the National Honor Society and received hockey and golf academic awards. In addition, he received his Eagle Scout award through the Boy Scouts of America.

Throughout high school, Jeffrey was a member of his school's hockey, golf and baseball teams, earning varsity letters in each. I am confident that Jeffrey will carry the lessons of his student and athletic leadership to the Air Force Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Jeffrey Wilson on the offer of his appointment to the United States Air Force Academy. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available. I am positive that Jeffrey will excel during his career at the Air Force Academy, and I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes to him as he begins his service to the Nation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE POLICE
TRAINING AND INDEPENDENT
REVIEW ACT OF 2015

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of The Police Training and Independent Review Act, which I introduced earlier today with colleague LACY CLAY of Missouri.

If enacted, the Police Training and Independent Review Act would help ensure the independent investigation and prosecution of law enforcement officers in cases involving their use of deadly force. It would also provide sensitivity training for law enforcement officers.

America received a wakeup call last year in Ferguson, Missouri. It received another in Staten Island, New York.

It received yet another in Cleveland, Ohio, and then North Charleston, South Carolina, and more recently in Baltimore.

Our nation faces sobering questions about the basic fairness of our criminal justice system. And we face sobering questions about race. These questions simply cannot be ignored.

For too many, for too long, justice has seemed too lacking.

Precisely how long, and for how many—these are numbers we ought to know, and it is shameful that we do not. The fact that police departments are not required to report data about when, where and against whom they use deadly force is absurd. Even FBI Director James Comey has said it is, "ridiculous that [he] can't tell you how many people were shot by the police last week, last month, last year."

Last year, and again earlier this year, I introduced the National Statistics on Deadly Force Transparency Act to address this. The legislation would give both lawmakers and the public the numbers we need to measure the problem, so we can figure out how best to address it.

However, I rise today to talk about another equally important step we can take, right now, that does not require us to wait for more data. We can remove the looming cloud of doubt that hangs over too many instances in which law enforcement officers use deadly force against unarmed individuals.

We can stop asking local prosecutors to investigate the same law enforcement officers with whom they work so closely, and whose relationships they rely upon to perform their daily responsibilities.

This is an obvious conflict of interest, and if we are serious about restoring a sense of fairness and justice, we must remove this conflict immediately.

To be sure, the vast majority of prosecutors and law enforcement officers are well meaning, dedicated public servants, and we depend upon them to keep us safe from criminals. And they have dangerous jobs, as we have seen all too frequently in recent months.

But the fact remains that some police departments don't vet their patrolmen well enough. Some allow wealthy supporters to be reserve officers where judgment is lacking and some don't provide all appropriate training. There are also some officers who go beyond the law in a callous disregard for due process.

While we have seen charges against officers in North Charleston and in Baltimore, the question remains: would they have been prosecuted if we didn't have video of the events in question?

According to a recent Washington Post investigation, there have been, "thousands of fatal shootings at the hands of police since 2005, [and] only 54 officers have been charged. Most were cleared or acquitted in the cases that have been resolved."

I can't stand here today and tell you whether each of these prosecutors was biased. But what I can tell you is that there is a perception of unfairness in certain kinds of cases, and that perception is poisoning the public trust.

But we can fix this problem.

The Police Training and Independent Review Act would give states a reason to do what they should already be doing: require the use of independent prosecutors when there is an obvious conflict of interest. If states refuse to use independent prosecutors for cases against law enforcement officers involving their use of deadly force, they lose federal funding,