It is little wonder that Dr. Champommier's work has earned him federal, state, and county commendations. I am pleased to add my voice to this chorus of congratulations. I thank Dr. Champommier for his many years of exemplary dedication to the families and children of my 40th Congressional District and beyond. I hope he will celebrate a very happy 75th birthday this Saturday, June 20th, with his beautiful wife—and my good friend—Dr. Marie S. Torres, and their extended family and friends.

CONGRATULATING CRAIG HOWARD ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Craig Howard on the completion of a successful career with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Howard has dedicated his career to serving our veterans. During his 37 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that veterans receive the medical care they need and deserve.

Mr. Howard has served as Director for the Canandaigua VA Medical Center since 2005. His leadership was instrumental in establishing the Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention and PTSD, the Veterans Crisis Line, the National Homeless Call Center, and the National Caregiver Support Line. These resources and services have had a profoundly positive impact on the lives of our local veterans.

During his tenure as Director, the Canandaigua VA Medical Center has ranked highly in both patient and employee satisfaction. Mr. Howard leaves behind a strong legacy of service and leadership: his work has left a lasting imprint on our community.

I thank Mr. Howard for his years of dedicated service to our veterans and wish him the very best in his retirement.

AMERICA GIVES MORE ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2015

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Customs bill—a bill that was included as part of a trade package that includes Trade Adjustment Assistance and Trade Promotion Authority, also known as Fast Track. This vote represents a flawed and hurried process to expedite the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. Moreover, the Customs Bill fails to strengthen trade policy and enforcement and instead is being used as a way to weaken TPA and its negotiating objectives.

While the Customs bill is designed to modernize customs operations and promote enforcement at the border through trade laws, it takes a number of steps back in these areas. For example, this bill cuts funding for the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center and the Trade Enforcement Trust Fund. It also removes a currency manipulation provision that passed out of the Senate with bipartisan support that would have imposed countervailing duties against countries that manipulate their currencies. I am also troubled by a provision that weakens a human trafficking negotiating objective that would have prevented the U.S. from entering into trade agreements with countries in the State Department Human Trafficking Report such as Malaysia, by allowing the President to simply certify that countries are taking ''concrete steps'' to address human trafficking.

In addition, I am deeply opposed to a new negotiating objective that was added in the 11th hour, which ensures that trade agreements do not create new obligations related to combating climate change or that would require changes in U.S. domestic laws. Trade agreements must not restrict our ability to tackle climate change in the 21st century.

This bill also adds restrictive language related to immigration to ensure that trade agreements do not require changes to U.S. immigration laws or the issuance of new visas.

Mr. Speaker, we have to strengthen TPA and its negotiating objectives—not weaken it. We must improve TPA before moving forward on any future trade agreement that will have wide-ranging consequences for America's working class. I strongly urge a ''no'' vote.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 364 severe weather unavoidably detained my flight in Chicago, Illinois and I was unable to make the vote series. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

TRIBUTE TO HEIDI VANDERHOLM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Heidi Vanderholm of Stanton, Iowa for receiving a $2,500 grant from Iowa Communications Alliance to attend Central College.

The Iowa Communications Alliance offers this grant scholarship to high school seniors as well as students already enrolled in technical schools, colleges, and universities who receive service from a telecommunications provider that is a member of the Iowa Communications Alliance. This honor was awarded to Heidi in order to help her achieve her dreams of earning a college education.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent future leaders like Heidi Vanderholm from the great state of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the United States Congress will join me in congratulating her for receiving this prestigious award. I wish her the best of luck in her studies and future career.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 364, flight was delayed due to weather. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Aye.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, on June 15, 2015, I was unavoidably detained in my district due to weather and missed recorded votes #364–365. Had I been present, on Roll Call #364, H. Res. 233—Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Iran should immediately release the three United States citizens that it holds, as well as provide all known information on any United States citizens that have disappeared within its borders, I would have voted YEA; and on Roll Call #365, H.R. 2559—To designate the ''PFC Milton A. Lee Medal of Honor Memorial Highway'' in the State of Texas, I would have voted YEA.