

TROOPER ELI MCCARSON, NEW
JERSEY STATE POLICE

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of fallen New Jersey State Police Trooper Eli McCarson for his extraordinary sacrifice and exemplary service to the citizens of New Jersey and the United States.

Trooper McCarson's dream was to serve his community as a member of the New Jersey State Police. His perseverance was finally rewarded in February 2015 when he graduated from the State Police Academy at the top of his class with honors. Unfortunately on December 17th, after just ten months on the force, Trooper McCarson was killed in a tragic car accident in the line of duty. His untimely death left behind his loving family—including his wife Jordan McCarson—and a grateful community.

Mr. Speaker, Trooper Eli McCarson's life reminds us that the men and women who serve and protect our communities put their lives on the line every day to protect us. I join with my community and all of New Jersey in honoring the achievements and selfless service of this truly exceptional young man.

HONORING MR. ROBERT JOHNSON,
CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST FROM
GRENADA, MS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Mr. Robert Johnson of Grenada, MS, a beloved civil rights activist and renowned public servant. He has been remembered by many as a fighter for justice, freedom and equality for all and a pillar of his community.

Johnson was born to the late Finley and Catherine Johnson on June 17, 1948, in Grenada, MS. The sixth of seven children, Robert learned the value of hard work and sacrifice. He attended Grenada High School where he played football and attended Alcorn State University on a full athletic scholarship.

In 1966, the Meredith March against fear would change the path in which Robert Johnson would take his life. Robert came back to Grenada to join the Civil Rights Movement and worked to establish and protect voting rights in Mississippi. He was the local youth leader of the Grenada County Freedom Movement. Through his work with the Grenada County Freedom Movement, he helped make the nation aware of the threats, intimidation, and lawlessness being inflicted upon Black people in the town.

He joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as a Field Project Director and worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dr. Ralph David Abernathy to continue SCLC programs in Grenada. His work with SCLC led him on organizing efforts across the country and even in Africa.

In 1971, he was jailed for refusing to be drafted into the military and was sentenced to

five years but was released on a full pardon in 1972 by President Gerald Ford after serving eighteen months of the sentence.

Johnson continued his activism with the SCLC which led him to Covington, GA, where he met his wife Mary. They were married in November of 1974 and were later blessed with two sons, Cleon and Marcus.

Robert began working for the Metro Atlanta Transit Authority as a bus operator and in 1985 began attending Mt. Ephraim Baptist Church. He and his family joined Mt. Ephraim soon after. Robert Johnson served as a trustee on the Official Board for a number of years. In 2002, he was ordained as a deacon. Around this time, Robert was honored along with Rev. Dr. Joseph Lowery, and other grassroots workers of the Civil Rights Movement with a trip to Durban, South Africa where they met South African activist and president, Nelson Mandela.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a special individual, Mr. Robert Johnson—a devoted servant of his community, a fighter for justice and equality for all people, a founder of the Grenada County Freedom Movement, and consummate family man. He will be missed by all those who know and love him.

HONORING UNC PRESIDENT TOM
ROSS

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a good friend and a devoted public servant, Tom Ross, who retired this month as President of the University of North Carolina system.

My wife Lisa and have known Tom and his wife Susan for many years. His son Tommy served in my office, making a major contribution to the development of the House Democracy Partnership. I have long admired Tom's dedication to the university, and I am very grateful for his service to our state.

A graduate of the UNC-Chapel Hill law school, Tom answered the call to serve as the UNC system's President in 2011, in the midst of some of the greatest financial challenges that the university has faced in its history. UNC not only overcame these challenges; it has thrived thanks to Tom's perseverance and strategic vision.

During his time at UNC, Tom made it easier to transfer from North Carolina community colleges to the four-year UNC institutions, expanding nontraditional students' access to higher education. He has focused effectively on the access of active-duty military and veterans to the system and on enhancing their chances to succeed. He has carefully overseen the selection of 11 new university chancellors, guaranteeing another generation of exceptional leadership for the system's 16 constituent universities.

Perhaps most importantly, Tom has led the university through economic adversity, protecting its mission and securing its financial footing. Compared to the beginning of Tom's tenure, UNC system graduation rates have risen 18 percent while spending per degree has dropped 15 percent—remarkable achievements that reflect Tom's leadership.

Tom's life has been dedicated to public service. He came to UNC from Davidson College, his alma mater and one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges, where he served as President from 2007 to 2011. At Davidson, he implemented the Davidson Trust, a new initiative designed to fully eliminate student debt through grants and student employment. This innovative program has helped ensure that Davidson graduates do not face a financial burden as they begin their careers. He also oversaw a period of exceptional growth at Davidson, in part inspired by the on-campus career of Stephen Curry, who has gone on to become the NBA MVP and a global superstar. I suppose it's true that success begets success.

Before his tenure at Davidson, Tom was President of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, which provides tens of millions of dollars annually in grants to organizations devoted to economic empowerment. Tom also spent 17 years as a judge on North Carolina's Superior Court, directed the state Administrative Office of the Courts, and led the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Committee, where he oversaw the development and implementation of new sentencing guidelines for non-violent offenders.

I cannot fail to note that Tom is leaving the presidency of UNC prematurely. The Board of Governors last year made an unexpected, unexplained decision to request his resignation, while acknowledging that his stewardship had been exemplary. This leaves little doubt that the decision was based on the fact that Tom does not share the Board's partisan loyalties. This was not only shabby treatment of an outstanding public servant; it also set a dangerous precedent for a university system that for most of its history has been free of this sort of political manipulation.

Tom has handled this difficult situation with characteristic dignity and grace. His final contribution as president may be one of his most important: to help us move beyond this episode in a way that avoids recrimination, protects the university's integrity, and builds on the many achievements of the past five years.

Lisa and I wish Tom well as he transitions to teaching and prepares for future endeavors. With Susan's unfailing support, he has made lasting contributions to our state's judicial system, nonprofit sector, and private and public higher education. He leaves our University stronger in important ways, despite the difficult economic and political environment in which he was called to lead. And he still has much to give. I am pleased to join thousands of North Carolinians in thanking him for his tireless service and in anticipating his contributions yet to come.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL EX-
TENDING ELIGIBILITY FOR NA-
TIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE
PROGRAMS TO CITIZENS OF THE
FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that would enable citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, collectively referred to as the

Freely Associated States (FAS), who reside in the United States to participate in National Community Service (CNS) programs, including AmeriCorps. This bill provides parity for citizens of the FAS who are able to join our military, receive federal student aid to further their education, and eligible to participate in other federal social programs.

The inability for FAS citizens to participate in CNS programs has had a direct impact on individuals residing in my home district of Guam. Last year, several FAS citizens who are studying at the University of Guam and enrolled in the AmeriCorps program were removed from the program because they were found to be ineligible under the citizenship guidelines. Despite having already begun working with their assigned service organizations, these individuals were forced to find alternate accommodations through the local Guam Legislature, which appropriated local funds to cover expenses that would have otherwise been provided through the Centers for National and Community Service. I believe that this was a great injustice to these individuals, who wanted to help the people of Guam and who serve as role models for others in our community.

I believe that FAS citizens who reside in the U.S. should be allowed to participate in national service programs, just as they are able to serve our nation in military service or obtain federal student aid to further their education. My bill would specifically amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to include citizens of the FAS who are residing in the U.S. in the list of qualified individuals, in addition to U.S. citizens or nationals, or lawful permanent residents of the United States. The bill will ensure that any FAS citizen in the U.S. who wants to participate is not denied the opportunity to make our community better. If we can allow FAS citizens to serve in our military and protect our way of life it is only fair that we allow them to serve our local communities through community service. As we work to make the Compacts more sustainable for the affected jurisdiction, I believe that this is a good way to continue our commitment to improving our relationships with these nations.

I thank my colleagues, Congresswoman TULSI GABBARD and Congressman KILLI SABLAN for their support of this bill. I look forward to working with them to move this bill through the legislative process and having it enacted into law.

TRIBUTE TO STUART O. WITT

HON. STEPHEN KNIGHT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a man who dedicated his life to the continued advancement of American aerospace.

Witt was born in Bakersfield, California and raised on the Scodie Ranch in the Kern River Valley. He graduated from Cal State Northridge in 1974, from the Naval Aviation Schools Command in 1976 and from the Naval Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN training) in 1980. He is also a 1996 graduate of the University of Maryland's Center for Creative Leadership.

Upon graduating college, Witt embarked on a storied military career in the Navy, where he spent time as an F-14 Tomcat pilot based on the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* and as an FA-18A Hornet project pilot at the Naval Air Warfare Center in China Lake, CA. After the Navy, Witt continued to fly professionally for nearly nine years as an engineering test pilot on the B-1B, F-16C and F-23. In 1993 he joined Computer Technology Associates, where he managed a \$100-million contract as Executive Vice President.

Since 2002, Witt was CEO and General Manager of the Mojave Air & Space Port, which lies just outside of my district, where he was the defining factor in making that Port the crucial institution that it is today. In addition to his efforts at Mojave, Witt also served as the Chairman of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation (CSF) from 2012-2014 where he worked tirelessly to promote the development of commercial human spaceflight and to bring about a 21st century space age for America.

I have worked with Stu on multiple occasions to develop legislation that would allow the commercial space industry to innovate and expand in the state of California, and can attest to his skills as a pioneer and leader. His legacy will be felt by space lovers, entrepreneurs, and explorers for generations.

IN DEFENSE OF SECOND AMENDMENT FREEDOMS

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, throughout this president's time in office, he has worked to undermine the 2nd Amendment freedoms of law-abiding Americans. It's no surprise that he would begin his final year exactly the same way.

The new unilateral actions announced by the president will do little to make our communities safer. But they could infringe on the rights of Americans to protect themselves and their families.

These unilateral actions are only an attempt to distract from the career failings of an ineffective president. In fact, most of them are about strictly enforcing our existing laws—something this president has repeatedly failed to do.

The Second Amendment is a founding principle of our Republic. I assure my constituents that I will continue to stand strong against any infringement.

SHERIFF CHARLES BILLINGHAM, CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sheriff Charles H. Billingham of Camden County, New Jersey for his achievements, contributions, and service to the people of New Jersey and the United States of America.

Sheriff Billingham started his 34-year career as a patrolman in Gloucester City, New Jer-

sey. Recognized for his talent and positive demeanor, he quickly rose through the ranks from patrolman to sergeant where he supervised and managed the daily activities of a patrol platoon. He moved to the Washington Township Police Department, which put him back on patrol again. His dedication earned him the respect from his fellow officers and he soon rose to the rank of chief of police. During his time as chief of police in Washington Township he focused many of his efforts on community outreach through educational programs including crime prevention, issues concerning youths, domestic violence, and drug awareness such as "project aware" and D.A.R.E.

In 2007, after serving as a councilman and Mayor of Gloucester City for nearly 4 years, he was elected Sheriff of Camden County. He brought with him the same "can do attitude" he had displayed throughout his career. As sheriff, he continued to focus on educating and incorporating the police into the community. In fact, his tenure saw a tremendous rise in community engagement and a plummeting crime rate. Moreover, his work ethic never wavered, even as he approached retirement he continued to energetically and enthusiastically protect our community. During his final days as sheriff while out on patrol during a routine traffic stop, he personally arrested three fugitives, and confiscated illegal weapons and a substantial amount of illegal drugs. A lifelong family man, he is now retiring to spend more time with his wife Marion and their two sons, Chuckie and Michael.

Mr. Speaker, Sheriff Billingham is a great American who exemplifies the selfless dedication of law enforcement officers throughout the country. I join Camden County and all of New Jersey in wishing him a happy retirement and thanking him for his outstanding service.

SUPPORTING TAIWAN'S DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AND RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition and support of our close ally Taiwan as it prepares to conduct free, fair and democratic presidential elections. On January 16, 2016, the Taiwanese people will go to the polls in a tremendous display of the core democratic principle of self-determination.

This year, we celebrated the 41st anniversary of the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act, a law that has helped foster a deep bond between the U.S. and our ally in the Pacific. As the only Member of Congress born in Taiwan and as a member of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, I am encouraged by our strong bilateral relations and the broad bipartisan support for Taiwan that exists in Congress today, and I look forward to expanding that relationship even further with the newly-elected president.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Taiwan a successful democratic and independent election.