

to working with them to address the effect this bill may have on them. The bill attempts to offset this effect by increasing funding authorization and ensures that we are not taking from one group just to pay another.

Thirdly, this legislation would clarify Congress' intent when we extended eligibility for housing assistance programs to the COFA migrants. This bill ensures that U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents are not displaced and are given priority when applying for housing benefits.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, this bill would commission independent research on the viability of the current compacts and make recommendations on policy alternatives moving forward. I do hope that this research will provide strategic guidance as we move toward renewal of the compacts in 2023 and ensure that we are administering these agreements in the best way.

I am so very pleased to count the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. TAKAI) as an original cosponsor of my bill.

As this Congress discusses solutions for the crisis in Puerto Rico, it is important that we also discuss challenges that the other territories face, especially the challenge of supporting the Compact of Free Association. While the challenges facing affected jurisdictions are nowhere near as serious as Puerto Rico, Mr. Speaker, doing nothing would only welcome economic and security challenges down the road.

I do look forward to this bill becoming law and it being a tremendous help to jurisdictions affected by the Compact impact.

INDEPENDENCE PLAZA HONORS AMERICA'S SPACE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 1972, my dad was transferred from northwest Alabama to southeast Texas. I remember the first time I got off the Gulf Freeway, headed east down NASA Road 1, and saw the Johnson Space Center and the Nassau Bay resort hotel with an NBC studio on top. Right then, it hit me: my neighbors were astronauts, Moon walkers. My life was changed forever.

The next 9 years were rather dull. Three missions of Skylab and one handshake with the Russians on Apollo-Soyuz.

The excitement came back in 1981. The Space Shuttle *Columbia* flew for the first time. The space shuttle was the heart and soul of human spaceflight until July 21, 2011, when three words ended the program: "Houston, wheels stop."

Those words were heard in the dark, 4:57 a.m. Texas time. My home was dark for 4½ years. That darkness will end on January 23 when Space Center Houston opens Independence Plaza right by the Johnson Space Center. Independence Plaza will have the Space

Shuttle *Independence* atop the 747 transport carrier.

Our space shuttles flew 133 successful flights, with crews as small as two or as large as seven, with 55,000 pounds of payload. Our shuttles carried astronauts from 17 nations: Belgium, Canada, France, Israel, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, and America.

Our shuttle built the International Space Station, which has had a human being on board since November 2, 2000. Scott Kelly has been on board the ISS since March 27, 2015. Scott must love the view because he will come home after 1 year in orbit.

The Hubble Space Telescope would have been the biggest piece of space junk ever without the space shuttle. When it was launched in 1990, it was a telescope that needed glasses. Its vision was blurry. Five shuttle missions followed, fixed its vision, gave it decades of new life, and changed history.

But Independence Plaza will do more than remind us of the achievements of our space shuttle. This exhibit will ensure we never forget the two crews we lost on space shuttles. Dick, Michael, Judy, Ron, Ellison, Greg, and Christa touched the face of God when *Challenger* exploded after 73 seconds of flight on January 28, 1986. Eighteen years later, on February 1, 2003, we lost Rick, Willie, Michael, Kalpana, David, Laurel, and Ilan when *Columbia* returned mortally wounded and broke up over their home, my home State of Texas. Independence Plaza will ensure that these 14 heroes will always be revered, and a new, young generation of Americans will follow their lead and soar into the heavens.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FINAL STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one recalls the state of the Union that President Obama inherited upon taking office: overwhelming problems occasioned by the near collapse of the economy, 700,000 jobs lost before he was even in office half a month. It would take many months more to arrest the slide. There were fierce battles, arguments about whether we should spend money to try to help people and industries.

His work was complicated by the announcement early on by the Republican leader in the Senate that his number one goal was not to fix the economy or deal with health care or the environment or national security; it was to prevent President Obama from being reelected to a second term.

Time has shown that the money that was spent was critical, and most independent experts agree that we should have invested more heavily in things like rebuilding and renewing America.

Even so, our performance has been better than any of the other developed economies.

Those results were achieved with divisions and arguments that continue to be played out today on the national political stage as there are people seeking the Presidency later this year. But my hope is that, as the President addresses this Chamber tonight, there might be an opportunity to move past some of the divisions and controversy.

My hope is, as the President looks up in the gallery and sees the First Lady, that he might pause and acknowledge her important work in health and nutrition; that he might spend just 3 minutes on a topic that can bring people together; that he would admit that we as a government still pay too much to the wrong people to grow the wrong crops in the wrong places, that we would be far better off if we weren't subsidizing people to grow food that actually makes Americans sick.

I would hope that he would propose that the Federal Government help more farmers and ranchers with research and market access at home and abroad. Let's pay those farmers and ranchers to protect water quality and water quantity.

I would hope that he would propose that we subsidize more healthy food in our schools and for senior citizens and low-income people.

I would hope that he would acknowledge the revolution that is taking place in food and agricultural thought and policy in this country, as documented in the recent PBS special, "In Defense of Food," with Michael Pollan.

There is an exciting national movement promoting value-added agriculture, healthy food, animal welfare, and environmental protection that will strengthen rural and small town America and provide more satisfaction for the men and women who work in agriculture.

It would only take 3 minutes, but it would be an important milestone for this revolution of food and farm policy that cannot happen soon enough.

RECOGNIZING COACH FRANK BEAMER ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GRIFFITH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach Frank Beamer on the occasion of his retirement as the head football coach at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University—more commonly known and fondly known as Virginia Tech—located in Blacksburg, Virginia, as Coach Beamer concludes his highly successful career. For almost three decades, Coach Beamer has been a tremendous leader in Virginia and a mentor to hundreds of student athletes.

In 29 seasons under Coach Beamer's leadership, Virginia Tech football has enjoyed unprecedented success, notching 237 wins, three Big East championships, four Atlantic Coast Conference