

on a healthier ecosystem to the next generation.

TERRORIST ATTACK IN BRUSSELS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as passengers boarded their early morning flights and commuters boarded the train to work, multiple bombs exploded in Brussels.

Days after Belgian law enforcement captured alive ISIS terrorist Salah Abdeslam, one of the suspected ring-leaders in the Paris attacks, ISIS terrorists struck again. At least 30 civilians were murdered and more than 200 others were injured.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the U.S.' current strategy against ISIS, which has allowed terrorist organizations to retain havens from which to plan and launch attacks for nearly 2 years, is inadequate. Empty words claiming progress, containment, and success are meaningless.

The latest attack is not surprising. Attacks will come to our soil if our leaders continue to refuse to define the enemy—radical Islam. Jihadists have promised to bring terror to the United States. They will deliver on that promise if we do not use our full resources to eliminate them. They are at war with us. Whether we are at war with them is still very unclear.

So as we mourn for the people of Belgium, the United States should work with all free people to eliminate this evil group, this terrorist group, ISIS.

And that is just the way it is.

CONGRATULATING DAVID PRINGLE FOR 37 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AFLAC INSURANCE COMPANY

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Pringle on his retirement and to congratulate him on his 37 years of service to Aflac Insurance Company.

Mr. Pringle began his work with Aflac as a sales associate in Mississippi, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Through hard work and dedication to the company, he was promoted to the senior vice president of government relations in 1990. He has maintained that position ever since.

One of Mr. Pringle's most notable accomplishments for Aflac is Aflac's State employee training program, which he developed while working at Aflac's global headquarters.

Through his years of service, Mr. Pringle has established himself as an expert in the field of health care, writing several publications on healthcare reform and insurance policies.

Mr. Pringle's dedication to Aflac and his service to the betterment of the en-

tire insurance industry will certainly be missed. I wish him the best with his future endeavors.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF FIVE OUTSTANDING UNITED STATES AIR FORCE LEADERS

(Mr. HARDY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of five of the most outstanding leaders in the United States Air Force. These five men—Major General Jay Silveria, Brigadier General Christopher Short, Colonel Richard Boutwell, Colonel Thomas Dempsey, and Colonel Aaron Steffens—have all served with honor and distinction at the Nellis Air Force Base back in my district in southern Nevada.

As a freshmen Member of Congress, I couldn't have asked for a better cadre of officers to lead the many young servicemembers who call my district home.

It has been a privilege to develop strong working relationships with each of these commanders and to seek their informed counsel on some of the most pressing issues affecting the readiness and the capabilities of our Air Force, as well as our national security priorities.

While I am sad to see them go, I know that they will bring the same integrity and leadership to their new commands.

To Tonto, Junior, Chase, Vader, and Fangs, the Nation is grateful for your service, and I wish you the best.

Aim high.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GROTHMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, in 1981, we started a national celebration in the United States honoring women. Congress passed legislation which authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week of March 7, 1928, as Women's History Week.

□ 1545

Throughout the next 5 years, Congress continued to pass joint resolutions designating a week in March as Women's History Week.

In 1987, Congress passed a new statute which designated the entire month of March, 1987, as Women's History Month.

Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month.

Since 1985, Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama have issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as Women's History Month.

We have so many women all throughout our country and each one of our congressional districts who have gone above and beyond and have etched their place into history through their outstanding service to their community and their country.

We have women who serve in our military, who are teachers in our classrooms, women who are first responders, artists, and businessowners.

I certainly wouldn't be able to be where I am today, standing here in this Chamber, if not for all the women in my life, especially my two daughters, Mikayla and Arianna.

There are two women who have strong New York-1 roots. One is from Setauket. Anna Strong was an American patriot and a member of the Culper Spy Ring, George Washington's military intelligence unit.

As part of George Washington's network of spies, she literally put it all on the line for liberty during the American Revolution, hanging different garments on her clothesline as a signal to other patriots on the movements of the British forces throughout Long Island.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was the First Lady to our 35th President, John F. Kennedy. Jackie O was born on the east end of Long Island in Southampton. In addition to her role as First Lady, she is also remembered for her contributions to the arts and historic preservation.

In each one of our districts, we can personalize what Women's History Month means to our individual districts because etched in the history going back in generations there is so much sacrifice to be able to not only take care of their families, but to advance their communities and their country.

The freedom and liberty that we cherish here in this Chamber would not be possible without the sacrifices of so many whom we honor throughout the year at different times, but it is the month of March in particular that we take an extra special pause to say thank you.

Before I served in Congress, I served in the New York State Senate. During my time there, there were countless measures to be supported ensuring that women are protected and given access to opportunity, security, and prosperity. As one of our colleagues, VIRGINIA FOXX, recently pointed out, every issue is a woman's issue.

In 2012 and 2013, while serving in the State senate, I had the opportunity to

vote in favor of the New York State Senate's Women's Equality Agenda, which passed the senate in both years.

It was a robust package of legislation to help with various protections, including what I am supportive of: equal pay for equal work.

I also voted to create a workforce training program within the Department of Labor. I fought for this program because, with the current state of the economy, many women and their families are struggling.

This program would help women to obtain higher paying jobs and give them access to better opportunities to provide for themselves and their families.

In State houses all across this country and local governments as well, there are opportunities to provide more of a chance for that woman and her family to be able to achieve truly the American Dream.

But sometimes government, regulations, and laws can block and prevent that access, access to educational opportunities, the ability to maybe own your own small business and grow it into something greater.

It is our duty, whether you are serving as a village mayor or a local town supervisor or if you are a Member of the United States Congress, to seek out opportunities to best represent those for whom we are elected to be their voice and ensure that they are given maximum opportunity to succeed.

I am pleased to be joined this afternoon by Mrs. DIANE BLACK, who is an amazing, exceptional woman in her own right.

I am sure that, at some point, there will be a Women's History Month Special Order in this Chamber a couple of generations from now where they will be talking about all of your outstanding service. You have not only served your district well, but have served our entire country well.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK).

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, Mr. ZELDIN, for yielding to me.

I have been sitting here listening to the gentleman's words, and I will say that I am honored to have the gentleman here talking about the women in his life, particularly his wife and his two daughters, and what the future may bring for them.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that every issue is a woman's issue, and it is true. I know Representative ZELDIN just made that comment.

When we talk about tax reform for our small businesses, this directly impacts 30 percent of small businessowners who are women.

When we talk about repealing ObamaCare's harmful 30-hour rule that is depressing hours and wages, we do so with the knowledge that the majority of those harmed by this rule are women.

When we talk about preserving and protecting the American Dream for fu-

ture generations, we do so with the hope that young girls like my two granddaughters would be able to live a life that they choose for themselves, not that someone else chooses for them.

For me, this topic is deeply personal. I spent the first years of my life living in public housing, the daughter of parents with no more than a ninth grade education. I know how matters of poverty acutely impact women because I lived it.

I came from a background where people didn't always know how to dream, and as a result, I was prepared to settle for a life of unfilled potential.

I had started to believe that, as a young woman growing up in the 1950s and 1960s who literally lived on the other side of the track, that maybe the American Dream wasn't for me.

But, in time, Mr. Speaker, doors of opportunity were opened that helped me realize a plan for my life that was greater than I could ever imagine.

I became the first person in my family to earn a college degree. I fulfilled my desire to become a registered nurse, and I became privileged to serve the State of Tennessee in the legislature and now in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I have traveled to far corners of the world, and I have seen the struggle that women endure for access to education, a paycheck, and for real independence.

I am also keenly aware that only here in this country is this story of mine possible. Only here could someone like me go from living in the halls of a public housing complex to serving in the Halls of the United States Congress. That is why we call it the American Dream.

On this Women's History Month, we must resolve to ensure that stories like mine aren't unique. The work we do here in Congress must reach today's young women with the truth that they have God-given gifts waiting to be used and that the American Dream is theirs to share in as well.

I again thank Congressman ZELDIN for bringing us together for this important conversation.

Mr. ZELDIN. I thank Mrs. BLACK for her important words and again for all her service.

One of the things that I will forever be inspired by with regard to Mrs. BLACK's service here in this Chamber is how much she values family and the strength of a strong family and the need for champions at all levels of government to fight on their behalf.

I mentioned earlier my two daughters, Mikayla and Arianna, identical girls. They are 9½. They are finishing fourth grade. When they were born, they were less than a pound and a half. They were born 14½ weeks early.

I was actually in Iraq in 2006, and a Red Cross message came out and said that my wife, Diana, went into labor and the babies weren't going to make it. It was a sad time. It was the 22nd week.

The doctors at Georgetown University Hospital were amazing. Somehow they managed to keep my daughters alive for 3 more weeks. They were born in the 25th week.

These girls went through more in their 3½ months in the hospital than I would ever wish upon anyone to have to experience. You learn a lot about prayer.

I hope this is okay. We probably accepted prayers in about 16 different religions during that experience. We would see these twins on one side of our girls, and the twins might be growing faster than ours. We might say to ourselves why aren't our girls growing as quickly as those two. But then on the other side there might be triplets, and you are watching parents mourn the loss of one of their triplets.

You learn to count your blessings, understanding that it is not about you. It is about them. Thanks to the miracle of prayer and modern medicine, they were able to come home.

They were on about a dozen medications each and heart monitors. It wasn't easy. They didn't hit 8 pounds until they were about 13 months old. But these girls were so strong. What they experienced during their time in the hospital was absolutely amazing to me and my wife.

They had multiple surgeries while they were there. There was a time where one of my daughters went into what is called septic shock, which has a 80, 90 percent mortality rate. While she was in septic shock, she had a stroke.

The doctors actually recommended that my wife and I discontinue treatment. Mikayla wasn't getting any better, but she wasn't getting any worse for about 24 hours, up to this point where the doctors were recommending that we discontinue treatment and let her go.

We decided that, if she was going to keep fighting, we would keep fighting with her. We elected to do this really risky brain surgery. My wife and I went to her and said goodbye. We went to the waiting room expecting the worst and hoping for the best.

The doctors came to us when surgery was done and said that Mikayla is not out of the woods yet, but things went better than expected. With a whole lot of fight, strength, prayer, and a lot of amazing medicine and expertise at that hospital, they are doing great. They are doing great.

Now, Mikayla ended up getting some early intervention when she was younger. My two daughters are equals with their peers. They have caught up to them. Just think of how many opportunities were provided to these girls from the moment they went into the hospital to today to be able to survive and to succeed.

Now, there are a lot of decisions that get made here in this Chamber that impact women, future women leaders of our country, young girls and boys who aren't old enough to vote.

Yet, some of the most important consequences of the decisions made in this

Chamber impact not just the women of today, but those of tomorrow who don't even have a vote.

There are women in this Chamber now. I have a few freshman colleagues who come to mind. And there are several women who were elected.

ELISE STEFANIK is the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. She just turned 31 years old.

MARTHA MCSALLY is the first female fighter pilot in American military history. She is serving here now as a freshman. I believe a happy birthday is in order to her.

I would say maybe happy 27th birthday, if you are listening. I don't want to get myself into trouble, but happy birthday to Martha.

MIA LOVE is the first Black Republican woman, but she is Mormon and Haitian. She is all sorts of firsts and is inspiring so many.

All of the three women I have just mentioned—and there are more that I could mention—are inspiring my daughters' generation to aim high because you may be a veteran, you might become a teacher, you might some day be an elected official or an artist or a businessowner.

□ 1600

It is good to have role models. That is why I speak about Anna Strong, an American patriot, who is part of that story of how our Nation was founded. Or, as I mentioned, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who was born in the First Congressional District of New York.

The decisions that we make here in this Chamber impact that next generation not even old enough to vote. So when we talk about the economy and budgets and debts and deficits, do you know what? I am not as concerned about the person who is part of making that decision or has a voice as much as a strong passion and emotion for that young girl who is going to be inheriting the consequences of passing the buck off to people who aren't even old enough to vote.

I spoke of my daughters, I talk about health, I talk about prayer, I talk about education, and the decisions that are made in this Chamber, in State houses, and local governments that provide opportunities for the business owners and the teachers while we pause on Women's History Month to honor those who have come before us. It is every day while we serve, every day that we serve, that we should pursue those opportunities in any way possible for anyone around now or that future generation.

I am proud to say that the highest ranking Republican woman in the United States of America is standing right next to me. We all deeply admire CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS on so many levels for her outstanding leadership in this Chamber. I know that some of the women's names I just mentioned who now serve here, or my daughters who are looking for role models in life, that

so many look up to you as they do Mrs. BLACK, who spoke just before you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS).

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I appreciate his service and his leadership on behalf of the people of New York and for being an advocate to make history move forward for women.

As we walk these halls of Congress, it is hard to miss the bronze and marble reminders of women who blazed the trail before us. We follow their lead, remember their struggles, and enjoy the rights and freedoms they have helped us secure. Perhaps the most lasting tribute we can make for them is through our effort to make history for the next generation of trailblazers.

Friends, we are nearing the end of Women's History Month, and I have reflected on the words of our beloved First Lady Nancy Reagan, who passed away earlier this month: "Feminism is the ability to choose what you want to do." Her words remind me just how much young girls need role models. They need to be able to look up to courageous women in every field who inspire them to dream so that they can say: She's cool. That's what I want to do, too.

Women like Dr. Shelley Redinger, the Superintendent of Spokane Public Schools in Spokane, who has been on the forefront of significantly improving graduation rates. She represents the school district by serving on several community boards, yet still finds time to visit or teach a class in one of the district's 50 schools.

Women like Dr. Patricia Butterfield, the dean of the WSU College of Nursing, who is recognized both in nursing and health sciences as a regional, national, and international scholar, and takes time to inspire her own students to have a sense of discovery.

Women like Brooke Martin, a 15-year-old from eastern Washington, who 3 years ago developed the idea for iCPooch to solve her dog's separation anxiety using video chat. After coming in second in a prestigious science competition, her invention is now sold on three continents.

It is my honor to represent these inspirational women. As the second chairwoman of the House Republican Conference, it is a privilege to serve alongside my passionate, accomplished, and talented House Republican colleagues, who are as diverse as the regions we represent.

RENEE ELLMERS and DIANE BLACK were nurses.

MIMI WALTERS was a stockbroker.

MARTHA MCSALLY was a colonel in the Air Force and the first female fighter pilot.

BARBARA COMSTOCK juggled starting a family with completing law school before she became chief counsel of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

SUSAN BROOKS was a U.S. attorney in Indiana, prosecuting high-profile cases

of mortgage fraud and online child exploitation.

VIRGINIA FOXX was the first in her family to go to college. She later earned a master's degree and a doctorate in education and served as president of a community college.

KAY GRANGER was the first woman to be elected mayor of Fort Worth and is the first and only Republican woman elected from Texas to the House of Representatives.

MARSHA BLACKBURN was the first woman to sell books door to door for Southwestern Company. After working her way up in the company, Marsha left to build a small business of her own.

VICKY HARTZLER was raised on the farm, served in the Missouri State House until taking time off after adopting a baby daughter, and then became the second Republican woman elected to Congress from Missouri.

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER is the first Hispanic in history to represent Washington State in the House, and her daughter is the first child to survive Potter's Syndrome.

LYNN JENKINS was raised on a dairy farm, and she is a certified public accountant.

CYNTHIA LUMMIS was the youngest woman elected to the Wyoming Legislature.

CANDICE MILLER served as Michigan's first female secretary of state.

KRISTI NOEM left college early to help run her family's ranch after her father died, but later earned her bachelor's degree in 2012, while serving in Congress.

MARTHA ROBY worked at a law firm, and she is one of the first two women elected to Congress from Alabama.

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN is the first Cuban American Latina elected to Congress.

ANN WAGNER was the United States Ambassador to Luxembourg.

JACKIE WALORSKI wore many hats. She was a television reporter, a missionary, and even the executive director of her local Humane Society.

ELISE STEFANIK, at 30, was the youngest woman ever elected to Congress.

MIA LOVE is the first African American Republican woman to serve in the House.

AMATA RADEWAGEN is the first woman elected to serve in Congress from American Samoa.

Each story is unique and incredible, and our presence in Congress is a reminder that all issues are women's issues.

For women in every corner of the country, we care about achieving a better life for ourselves and our children.

As Congresswoman BLACKBURN so aptly put it: It is a poetic coincidence that Mrs. Reagan passed away during this month of remembrance. She will go down in history as one of the most influential and consequential first ladies in American history, and a permanent fixture in our memories.

The onus is now on us as women leaders to show girls across this country

that with hard work, they can achieve anything. No dream is too big and no goal too farfetched. We take seriously this responsibility to encourage and empower the next generation of female leaders with how we interact, how we present ourselves as leaders, and the policies we choose to pursue.

That is why House Republicans are building an agenda to restore a confident America, where every American feels secure in their lives and in their futures. Let's focus on a bright future for every American, every woman, to live courageously, follow their hearts, see potential in others, and be risk-takers. That is where women can keep making history for generations to come.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS for being a strong leader, a trailblazer, and a role model to many women who serve here in this Chamber and to, I am sure, countless women inside of her district and all around this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), who was referenced by Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, for her role taking on incredible responsibility inside of our Justice Department ensuring that America and her community was safe. She continues her service here today as an important leader and voice in this Chamber.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding, and I thank him for leading this Special Order. I want to also thank and commend him for his service to our country in his many years of service in the armed services.

I rise today in honor of Women's History Month, as have those who have gone before me.

One hundred years ago, the very first woman was elected to Congress. Her name was Representative Jeannette Rankin. She was elected by the people of the great State of Montana to serve in the House of Representatives. This was even a few years before women were given the right to vote in this country.

Since then, 313 women have served in Congress as United States representatives, delegates, or Senators. So think about that: 100 years and only 313 women have been elected to represent their home districts and States in this country.

I am very proud to be here with the gentlewoman from Tennessee, and we just heard from the gentlewoman from the State of Washington, and I am proud to be one of these 313 women.

When I was elected, I joined my colleague from Indiana, JACKIE WALORSKI, and we were, in fact, the first Republican women elected to represent the State of Indiana in 53 years. It had been 53 years since a representative—her name was Cecil Hardin—represented the western part of our State. She served in Congress for 10 years from 1949 to 1959.

One hundred years after Representative Rankin made history by winning

the first congressional seat held by women, women like me are still making history by running and winning elected office. Today, I serve in the House of Representatives with 84 women. As you have just heard, we are as diverse as the places we represent. Yet, as I talk to my colleagues, we all agree on one thing: We have much more work to do. Even though there are a record number of women in Congress, we are still just 20 percent of the total.

We are not alone, however, in that gender disparity. From Congress to State legislatures, to governors and mayor's offices, women represent about one in five elected officials. That figure has remained relatively consistent since the 1990s. We have plateaued.

It is not just in Congress. That same gender disparity can be seen at the Emmy Awards, in the executive boardroom, and in the newsroom.

This Women's History Month, instead of just focusing on all of the incredible accomplishments and achievements of the women that have come before us, I also want to mention for a short time about our hopes and our goals for the future, our dreams for what women will be able to accomplish in the next 100 years.

More women are now earning college degrees—associate's, bachelor's, and doctoral—than men today. These women, as they graduate, are actually more likely than their male counterparts to have a job lined up. These young women are the future history makers who will work on the front lines to fight cancer and to find a cure to cancer. They will serve with dignity in this Chamber and they will serve in leadership levels at all levels of government. They will be the women who will lead in the board room, and they will be the women who will build the next generation of technology.

We know that there are women coming behind us who will be making a difference. I look forward to future Women's History Months when we can talk about those women and what they have achieved.

Again, I want to thank Mr. ZELDIN for giving us the opportunity to talk about women, both past, present, and future.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. BROOKS for being here. Hopefully, for all of those young girls who come home from school and, as part of their routine, they are watching C-SPAN right now, looking for inspiration on what to do with their life—high school, college—you try to figure out what the right path is for you and you search around for role models.

□ 1615

I can only imagine how many women have asked the gentlewoman: How? What is the path? Tell me. There really isn't one path to get to this Chamber or to be that teacher or that veteran; but the gentlewoman has pursued a path that, I am sure, inspires so many

in her home district, and I greatly thank her for her service to our country.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. I thank the gentleman.

I must say that, certainly, when I started my path right out of college, I would not have ever guessed that I would have been here in the United States House of Representatives. I think, when people approach you and ask you to consider this type of public service, I hope that a lot of young women look to the women who are here and see that we have been able to do it and that they can as well.

It is an honor to serve with the gentleman.

Mr. ZELDIN. I would also venture to guess, during the gentlewoman's time as a prosecutor in our judicial system, that there have been countless women whom she has seen firsthand who have searched for that advice on how to go through that really tough challenge in their lives and their feeling vulnerable or trapped but with that strength of character of knowing there is someone around to help them out of tough times.

The gentlewoman's experiences throughout that path must give her an incredible perspective for those women who might, right now, be in abusive relationships or who have suffered something traumatic in their lives and don't know where to go. They feel trapped.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. I have to tell the gentleman that I think there have been a number of women role models in my life, women who have served as judges—Federal judges, State court judges—who have been tremendous mentors to the women of the bar. I have been an attorney for 30 years, and there is a sisterhood of those who practice law and who work to uphold the laws. We work together to try to support each other, not just in the courtrooms but on our professional career paths. They are women like Federal Judge Sarah Evans Barker, who is about to retire, and another Federal judge, Sue Shields, who was the first female judge in the State of Indiana. She was the first female judge at the State court level, and then she also served on the Federal bench as a magistrate.

They have been strong role models and have helped us as lawyers to deal with our colleagues or with those we are bringing up through the ranks and offering that hand up as they have offered that hand up to me. We are, often, trying to make sure that women can overcome whatever obstacles they might have in continuing their career paths.

Mr. ZELDIN. I am witnessing, firsthand, the gentlewoman's giving back many times over. I thank her for participating in honor of Women's History Month and for all she does in creating her own legacy and trailblazing herself, which I am sure will be spoken about for many years to come.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. I thank the gentleman.

I only hope to make Cecil Harden's legacy proud, who served from 1949 to 1959, as a Member who is severing in this great Chamber from the great State of Indiana.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, as Mrs. BROOKS departs, I think of CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS' words in that this has been an inspiring hour. I just think of these three women who are standing before me and what they have accomplished. Gosh.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK). I thank her for being here and for making this an important hour and important message on so many different levels.

Mrs. BLACK. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of recognizing someone who mentored me when I was back in the State senate and had the honor of serving there with a Lieutenant Governor who was a very fine man and who is retiring.

I thank the gentleman for yielding in order for me to recognize him and to let him know how much we have appreciated his service to the State of Tennessee. I thank him for his mentorship to me as a young senator back at the State level.

Mr. ZELDIN. I can only imagine how many stories the gentlewoman might have along the way of the people with whom she came in contact.

Mr. Speaker, for me, my parents were divorced and remarried, so I grew up with four parents. I went through a few divorces with them. Now, my grandparents were married for over 71 years. If they lost everything—if they didn't have a home, if they didn't have any money, if they didn't have any friends—and if they only had each other, they would have been happy. They found success in life as soon as they had found each other.

Before the gentlewoman leaves, I just want to let her know how much so many Members of this Chamber appreciate everything she does. Whatever it is that she has experienced or encountered in life in her path to get here today, she makes the most of every minute of being in this Chamber on behalf of keeping our families strong, and I value that very much.

Mrs. BLACK. I thank the gentleman for that. I appreciate his saying that.

Mr. Speaker, my family is number one in my life. I have two granddaughters, and I am hoping that everything that I teach them—that includes cooking and sewing and fishing—they will remember fondly as they grow into young women as well. I encourage them to be all that they can be, and I think, given their strong personalities that I see right now, we are going to see them as being leaders when they grow up as well.

Mr. ZELDIN. After this hour is over, at another time, maybe the gentlewoman can give me advice, since I have two 9-year-old girls at home, as to what is in store for me in 2 or 3 years. I hear these vicious rumors that things might change.

Mrs. BLACK. I will tell the gentleman, no matter what phase they go through, they will always be your little girls. The thing that the gentleman needs to do, every day, every night, every moment, is just let them know how much he loves them, and they will grow up to be fine young women.

Mr. ZELDIN. If they ever give me a hard time, I will say that DIANE BLACK told me that this was only going to be temporary.

Mrs. BLACK. You send them to see Mama Black.

Mr. ZELDIN. All right. Hopefully, I won't be doing that as a last resort. I might make that plan A.

Mrs. BLACK. I have a feeling that the gentleman is going to be quite a good daddy—that he is and that he will be—as they grow through those difficult years, which all little girls do; so the gentleman will have those years. Just remember, on the other end, they will come out to be beautiful young women.

Mr. ZELDIN. I thank the gentleman. In all seriousness, she really does provide inspiration for so many in how much she values a strong family.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Mr. TED POE, who is well respected in this Chamber for not just his straight talk and his intellect, but as someone who is a fierce champion of American security and of our Constitution. It is obvious that he also has a soft spot in his heart for the importance of honoring those in our lives and in our country who have come before us and who serve today to make this place extra special.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from New York.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here, as the gentleman says, to recognize the people who have influenced our lives. Of course, we are talking about the women who have influenced our lives to help us be what we turned out to be. I want to talk specifically about some Texas women whom I consider to be a rare breed. They are tenacious, strong-willed, nurturing, and also kind.

One of those is my mother. I am blessed that my mom and dad are both alive. They are 90 years of age. My mom was a Red Cross volunteer during World War II. She met my dad. He was in World War II, in Germany, coming back to the United States. He was being re-equipped for the invasion of Japan. They met at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. We call that "church" in Texas. They got married, and they have been married now for 70 years. She not only started out as a volunteer, but she has done all remarkable things, including being a schoolteacher, raising my sister and me, and doing other wonderful things.

In the State of Texas, we are proud, as other States are. We have many modern-day influential women, including former First Ladies Laura Bush and Barbara Bush and our late Governor, Ann Richards. These women were influential, powerful, and success-

ful in their own right, but they were not the first of their kind. There was another generation of pioneers who came before them, women like my grandmother, Lady Bird Johnson, and Ma Ferguson, who paved the way for future generations of Texas women.

My grandmother, really, was more influential in my life than were my own parents. She lived to the age of 99. She raised me to be in public service, and I always have been in public service because of her: I taught school; I was in the Air Force Reserves; I was a prosecutor; then I was a judge and a Member of Congress—all because of my grandmother. She taught me many lessons, and she made it very simple. Not only did she inspire me to be in public service—I took that good advice—but she said, until the day she died, that she had failed, for my grandmother was, as we say in the South, a Yellow Dog Democrat. She could not believe that I had crossed over to the other side and become a Republican, and I am not sure that she ever forgave me for being a Republican.

She was a strong-minded, no nonsense individual. She used to always say, "There is nothing more powerful than a woman who has made up her mind," and that is true. For a woman who has made up her mind, get out of the way. We find that true even today. That has proven to be one of the most valuable lessons she ever taught me.

President Lyndon Johnson was a hard-nosed politician, but his contributions to Texas as President were really surpassed, in my opinion, by his dogged First Lady or, as we called her, Lady Bird Johnson. She was one of the finest Southern and politically astute women we have ever had in the State of Texas. While she is best remembered for her love of the environment and the preservation of our natural resources, she was no wallflower in the business and political world either. She was her husband's strongest supporter and was with him, giving advice, step for step, throughout his entire career while, at the same time, carving out a path for herself in the business world. She turned a debt-ridden Austin radio station into a multimillion-dollar broadcast empire. Her resume reads like that of a superwoman.

Among her many achievements, she played a pivotal part in shaping legislation by lobbying and speaking before Congress in support of the highway beautification bill, better known as Lady Bird's Bill. She oversaw every detail in the creation of the Presidential library, which became a model for other Presidential libraries today. Of course, she served faithfully, and often in awe of her colleagues, as a regent of her alma mater, the University of Texas.

Every spring—this time of the year—people head up from Houston to Austin on Highway 290. They see the wildflowers, and there are bazillions of them everywhere at this time of the year. Every bluebonnet we see throughout Texas Hill Country and every tree

we plant here at home, along a place called Will Clayton Parkway, is a tribute to Lady Bird Johnson and her determination that we are going to keep Texas beautiful.

Before there was a Lady Bird, Texas was home to another fiery, inspirational woman. You may have never heard about her. Her name was Ma Ferguson. The year was 1899—over 100 years ago—when Miriam Amanda Wallace married James Ferguson, who later became the Governor of Texas. Ma Ferguson served as the first lady of Texas from 1915 until 1917, which was about 2½ years, until Pa Ferguson got himself in a little trouble. He was impeached by the State of Texas and the legislature during his second term and was barred from ever running for office anywhere again.

Then Ma changed history. She did the unthinkable and ran for Governor of Texas—as a woman. Texas had only been run by men before, but Ma didn't care—she was going to run. She ran on a platform of two Governors for the election of one. Of course, Ma was not in prison like Pa was, but, apparently, they did work together. She ran against Klan-supported Felix Robertson in the Democratic primary and claimed victory with the Democratic nomination. Back in those days, there were no Republicans in Texas. Everybody was a Democrat. The handful of Republicans never admitted it. Winning the Democrat primary was tantamount to winning the general election in November. Ma later became the first female Governor of Texas and only the second female Governor of the whole United States. She defeated a little known candidate in 1924 called George Butte, a Republican.

The two Fergusons became known as “Ma and Pa,” and—no surprise—Ma ran the show. However, Ma's Governorship was tainted by the criticism of her loose policy of pardoning people in the penitentiary. She was not above her critics—she pardoned thousands of inmates during her Governorship. To many, the motive behind the pardons was a little questionable, and allegations of bribery, ultimately, led to her next Governor's race and its defeat. After she lost the next election, Ma continued her political fight, and she regained her Governor's seat in 1932—again, for a second term.

□ 1630

One of her best achievements was the signing of Texas House Bill 194. It established the University of Houston as a 4-year institution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I went to the University of Houston Law School. I am glad it got established. Ma would be proud to see the University of Houston today. The Ferguson name lived long after the retirement of both Ma and Pa.

My grandmother, Lady Bird Johnson, Ma Ferguson, Ann Richards, and the Bush women came from a generation of women that were strong and influen-

tial. They possessed the grace of an angel, yet led with both forceful and effective political genius.

Few women of their later generation worked outside of the home, but few men succeeded without the backing of those ladies. These women did it all. They effortlessly backed their husbands while changing the world all at the same time.

March, this month, is Women's History Month. So it is time we honor those women who lived years and years ago, honor those women who lived back during the Greatest Generation's time and, of course, the women who live today.

All those women now are in every profession, as stated earlier, including the legal profession, acting as judges and prosecutors and, not only that, Members of Congress, Members of Cabinets, and ladies that give a lot of their time and money to the community. So we are thankful for them.

I appreciate the time that the gentleman from New York has given me so we could talk about some of these iron-willed, strong-willed women that have made up their minds.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas.

I would imagine anyone who was wondering what Women's History Month was all about should just listen to your remarks as you pay exceptional tribute to some amazing women from your home State of Texas who all left a mark not only in your life, but in others' lives as well.

These are women who, I am sure, are getting celebrated all throughout your State and this country not just by you, but by others as well.

In my home State of New York, it is tough. They give us a month and here tonight they give us an hour. There really are so many different women who gave us this opportunity to take us to today where the two of us can stand here on this particular House floor and speak to each other about such an important topic that apparently 25 years ago didn't even happen. It wasn't even until the early 1980s that we even started recognizing a women's history week.

So here we are, and I am glad that you are part of it. I can see that there is a lot of inspiration from women in your life.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas. Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York.

I agree with him. A month is really not enough time to celebrate and honor women in our history that just made a big difference in a lot of people's lives.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people here in this Chamber who all find different issues that interest them that they focus heavily on and move the ball forward in a very positive way.

The one thing that I have experienced during my time serving here—and I am in my first term and serve on the House Foreign Affairs Committee—

is that, as the subcommittee chairman of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee, what I have experienced is that you do a lot to keep America safe, to keep the women and men of your district and this country safe.

So I really do appreciate your service. Because this is not just about reflecting on service in the past, but challenging ourselves to do even more and to provide more opportunity forward.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas. Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), who has a very special guest here she would like to recognize.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR RON RAMSEY

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I recognize Tennessee's Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey, who is going to be retiring after his years of service.

Today I rise to honor my friend, Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey, on his upcoming retirement from the Tennessee State Senate. It is not an exaggeration to say that Lieutenant Governor Ramsey changed Tennessee history. He was, after all, our first Republican Lieutenant Governor in over 140 years.

His legacy will be one of preserving that which makes Tennessee special: our low tax burden, our commitment to fiscal responsibility, and our tradition of defending life.

It was among one of the great honors of my professional career to serve as chairman of the State Republican Caucus under his leadership and to partner with him as we laid the groundwork for the conservative supermajority that we enjoy today in Tennessee.

I will never forget being in the Senate Chamber the moment that Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey was elected. He came to the well of the Senate floor and, before doing anything else, paid honor to God, telling all of us in the room and everyone else watching that it is to Him we owe our very being.

He then thanked his family, including his wife, Sindy, who has served Tennessee with distinction as our Second Lady for nearly a decade.

In that moment, Lieutenant Governor Ramsey reminded all of us of his priorities. He loves our State. He loves public service. But as anyone who knows him can attest, his faith and his family are of the greatest importance. I will always be thankful to him for setting that example.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that Lieutenant Governor Ramsey arose to his post in the State leadership shortly after a dark time in Tennessee history, which saw the very public failings of legislators on both sides of the aisle.

He was an example of character and personal integrity at that moment when we needed it the most and, in time, he made us believe that government could do right by its people. Lieutenant Governor Ramsey often reminded us, “It matters who governs.” Indeed, it does.

As we reflect on where Tennessee has come from and where we are headed, we can say with certainty that our State is stronger because of Ron Ramsey's leadership. I count it a privilege to call him my friend.

I wish him, his wife Cindy, and his beautiful family all the best in this next chapter of their lives.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, as we come toward the end of our hour remembering and celebrating the women who have come before us and who serve today, trying their hardest to create more opportunities going forward, I would like to mention eight young ladies from the First Congressional District of New York who I was proud to nominate to service academies this year:

Taya Coniglio, Skylar Grathwohl, and Gabriella Franco were nominated to the U.S. Naval Academy.

Ally McFayden and Dana Fasano were nominated to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

Chelsea Chamberlin, Isabella Cortes, and Emma Fasolino were nominated to the U.S. Military Academy.

These eight young ladies have stepped up wanting to raise their hand to defend our country. Going off to a service academy comes with an obligation to wear that uniform and serve on Active Duty afterwards.

For anyone who signs up post-9/11, you understand what it is that you are signing up for. To just think that these young ladies were 2, 3 years old on September 11, 2001, all that they know is the post-9/11 America and world. Yet, they are signing up to want to serve our country as officers.

There are over 2 million women veterans. So as we consider legislation in this House, I cosponsored H.R. 1356, the Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act, which assists our women veterans.

While we try to provide more access to health care for our women veterans, there are many opportunities available to us that still have not yet been achieved and pursued to victory.

Women make up 15 percent of the U.S. military's Active-Duty personnel and 18 percent of the National Guard and Reserve forces.

H.R. 1356 will improve VA facilities for women veterans, hold VA medical facility directors accountable for performance measures, ensure the availability of OB/GYN services in VA medical centers, and calls for a GAO study on the VA's ability to meet the needs of women veterans.

Whether it is the eight young ladies I mentioned who wanted to go to U.S. service academies or those who are currently, as we stand here, over in harm's way in the Middle East and elsewhere, away from their families and who have sons and daughters here at home—and they may not just be on their first deployment. They may be on their fourth or fifth or sixth deployment.

When they come home, whether they come home in one piece, whether they

come home with the physical or mental wounds of war, whether they need assistance pursuing educational or vocational opportunities, I want to thank our women veterans for their service to our Nation.

We honor all women during this hour, but I wanted to close by paying an extra special tribute and thank you to our women veterans and, once again, to all of the women in my life.

I yield back the balance of my time.

WORLD WATER DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 30 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the Congressman and doctor, DAN BENISHEK, from Michigan's First District, which encompasses Marquette and Mackinac Island and Traverse City, to name a few famous towns and island. I welcome him to participate this evening as well as our other colleagues from the Great Lakes.

I rise tonight to mark the occasion of World Water Day. As such, I would like to discuss the Great Lakes, an American freshwater treasure, irreplaceable on our globe. Actually, it is the largest source of freshwater in the United States and represents about 20 percent of the world's freshwater supply.

The district that I represent, which is a little south of Michigan, down in Ohio, sits nestled across Lake Erie's entire south coast, extending from Cleveland all the way west to Toledo and encompasses all of Ohio's ports but for one.

There should be a sign, actually, on the Ohio Turnpike nearby that marks our shoreline as the step-off point, since Lake Erie is the most southern of all the lakes, as the largest body of freshwater on the face of the Earth.

I see our dear colleague, the co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force with me, Congressman MIKE KELLY of Erie, Pennsylvania, who has joined us. It is also a great port city, nestled along these Great Lakes.

Let me begin by saying, since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, Lake Erie itself has been on a path to recovery. It got very sick back in the 20th century.

Point sources of pollution, such as inadequate wastewater treatment facilities and infrastructure and industrial outfalls have been slowly coming. Since back then and the passage of the Clean Water Act and the establishment of Earth Day, they have been coming into EPA compliance.

One needs no further proof in tracking the rebirth of America's symbol, the bald eagle, than to really track Lake Erie's health. Lake Erie is the shallowest of the lakes; and, therefore, it is kind of the canary in the coal mine. What happens there will happen in the other lakes subsequently.

The bald eagle had actually become an endangered species by the time of the 1970s, and only two eagles were left on our great lake, Lake Erie. There were no eaglets being born.

Due to the Clean Water Act's passage and literally the banning of DDT and the repair of many of the industrial outfalls, which we are still working on, and the combined sewer overflows, what happened, as we moved into the 21st century, was human progress.

Today hundreds of baby eaglets are being born across Lake Erie, and they are flying other places around the country. Amazingly, the bald eagle has been taken off the endangered species list. So progress is possible. Humans can really repair the environment if they are dedicated to us.

For those of us who live in Lake Erie's western basin, which is the far western part of the State, the health of our lake is a living reality and access to freshwater has become the background noise of our daily lives, becoming more pronounced when tragedy strikes, as it did most recently in Flint, Michigan, and Sebring, Ohio, with lead in freshwater.

□ 1645

Our region works and plays with a new normal that includes very frequent water quality reports now, updates on beach postings—whether you can swim or not—water utility fee increases, and a general concern about a troubling set of scientific questions that still go unanswered.

Unfortunately, this administration has not recognized these concerns and seeks to cut Federal support to Great Lakes States by \$148 million for next year. Some would call that an oxymoron; it makes no sense in view of what is happening across our region, but it is happening.

This evening—and I am going to yield to my colleagues before I get into these topics—I would like to address the water infrastructure needs of the Great Lakes, harmful algal blooms, which literally shut down the city of Toledo's water system a year-and-a-half ago, denying fresh water for 3 days to citizens, to businesses, and to institutions in that region because of something called microcystin, which is the toxic part of certain types of algal blooms which we are trying to address. So harmful algal blooms will be one of my topics.

Another topic will be the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which is so important to all of us in helping to improve our Great Lakes.

Stopping the Asian carp is another topic.

The next topic will be the Great Lakes navigation system itself, an antiquated system that has to be updated for this 21st century.

Finally, I will discuss the harbor maintenance fund. These are all major issues across the Great Lakes region, which we would like to place on the RECORD this evening.