IN TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MICHAEL SMITH OF THE DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to pay tribute to Sergeant Michael Smith of the Dallas Police Department. Sgt. Smith, along with his fellow police officers: Lorne Aherns, Michael Krol, Brent Thompson, and Patrick Zamarripa died in the tragic police ambush in Dallas, Texas, last week. All of these officers were serving to help facilitate the First Amendment rights of all citizens to freely assemble and express their views. When shots rang out in downtown Dallas on the evening of July 7th and the early morning of July 8th, these officers ran towards the danger and harm's way to keep the citizens safe that they are sworn to protect.

A resident of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, Sgt. Smith lived in Carrollton and was a veteran supervisor officer of the Dallas Police Department (DPD), having joined the force in 1989. Prior to his service as a police officer, Sgt. Smith served all of us by wearing a different uniform—the uniform of an Army Ranger. In both his military and police service, Michael Smith was among the very best of public servants.

Service in uniform was only one of the ways that Michael Smith gave back to the community. He was an active volunteer member for his church, Watermark Community Church, and the YMCA. His lasting legacy will be found in the hearts of the many people whom he touched, served, and protected.

He is survived by his wife Heidi, a teacher at Mary Immaculate Catholic School and a former city employee for Farmers Branch, Texas, and two daughters, Victoria and Caroline.

I ask that all of my colleagues, and the entire nation, honor the life of Sgt. Michael Smith and keep the Smith family in their thoughts and prayers.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH PIOPOLIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of St. John the Baptist Parish in Piopolis, IL.

St. John the Baptist church was established in 1841. The parish operated a school from 1870 through 1964. Precious Blood Sisters came from Burwell, Germany, to teach at the school. Nine sisters arrived on February 28th, 1870. There were Precious Blood Sisters teaching in Piopolis until the school closed in 1964.

The parish is in a farming community; their membership is comprised of 184 families. Because of the strength and character of its members, the parish possesses both a rich history and a vibrant future. They are commemorating their 175th anniversary with a special mass with festivities to follow on August 21st, 2016. I am honored to recognize such a strong faith community in my district.

I look forward to the continued prosperity of St. John the Baptist Parish in Piopolis for many years to come.

PRESIDENT ERDOGAN'S ASSAULT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE TURKISH PEOPLE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind our government that the human rights abuses committed by Turkish President Erdogan are grave and ongoing, and to distinguish between the Turkish president and the Turkish people—and to stand with the people.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has in recent years been aggressively violating the human rights of Turkish citizens and undermining the rule of law, in order to root out dissent and consolidate his personal power. The freedom of the press and the rights of common citizens to run schools, businesses, and volunteer associations have come under direct threat.

Since assuming the presidency two years ago, President Erdogan has undermined the independence of the judiciary, jeopardizing access to a fair trial and undercutting government accountability. In 2014, he worked to stack the country's High Council of Judges and Prosecutors with party loyalists, enabling his government to ease arrest procedures and curtail opportunities for appeal. This facilitated the detention of thousands of activists, journalists, and businessmen under the country's overbroad terrorism statute. The President has exploited his growing leverage over the courts: his government's reshuffling last month of 3,700 judges and prosecutors rewarded pliant members of the judiciary while punishing others who ruled against the government or heard cases involving official corruption. A law passed earlier this month dismissed most of the judges on Turkey's highest courts, leaving it up to the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors to reappoint them or pick their successors.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to undermining government institutions, President Erdogan's tightening grip on Turkey is also weakening the vitality of Turkish society. Under President Erdogan's direction, state authorities are undertaking a campaign of retribution against Erdogan's critics. Since Erdogan assumed the presidency in 2014, the government has opened nearly 2,000 cases against people suspected of "insulting the president"—a crime in Turkey.

Professional journalists and major news outlets in particular have incurred the wrath of the President. For reporting that is unflattering to Erdogan, whether on national security issues, the conflict with the Kurds, or official corruption, press outlets have been charged with "supporting terrorism" or have had their entire operations taken over by government-appointed trustees. In one of the most egregious examples, Turkish authorities in March raided the offices of the nation's highest-circulation newspaper, Zaman, and overnight placed it under hand-picked, progovernment management.

Mr. Speaker, President Erdogan has taken to politicizing the charge of "supporting terrorism"—undermining the serious business of fighting terrorism, one of the gravest threats faced by the Turkish people. One persistent critic of Erdogan's centralization agenda and authoritarian tendencies is Fethullah Gulen, the founder of Hizmet, a moderate, Islamic civic movement dedicated to promoting education, popular piety, and civic engagement. Because of this criticism, Hizmet and its followers have suffered wave after wave of unfounded terrorism charges and forcible government seizures of businesses, universities, and schools. In May, the Turkish Cabinet approved a decision to designate Hizmet a "terrorist organization," guaranteeing that this campaign of political retribution will continue. Gulen's followers have been placed in the crosshairs of the very arbitrary policies they criticize. Yet neither our State Department, nor the European Union, nor any other respected body outside Turkey, has ever characterized Hizmet as a terrorist group or anything like it—the Cabinet's designation is absurd.

Mr. Speaker, in recent months, the Turkish people have been struck by a wave of violent attacks perpetrated by Islamist and Kurdish terrorists—most recently, a triple-suicide attack at Istanbul's international airport by Islamist extremists killed 44 innocent civilians. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those maimed in these attacks, to all those who lost beloved family and friends.

I am confident that the Turkish people—for centuries renowned for their bravery—will never be cowed by terrorists, and that they will equally resist President Erdogan's attempt to undermine their rights, laws, and freedoms. Our government should stand with the Turkish people on both fronts.

HONORING WILLIE "SATELLITE" TOTTEN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Willie Totten, who is a former professional football player and current college football coach. Totten played his high school football at J.Z. George High School in North Carrollton, Mississippi. Totten was a four-year starter quarterback at Mississippi Valley State University from 1981 to 1985, along with Jerry Rice as his target as wide receiver. Totten set more than 50 Division I-AA passing records, and Rice setting many Division I-AA receiving records.

The Delta Devils averaged 59 points a game during the 1984 season, with Totten throwing for a record 58 touchdowns and leading the Delta Devils to the Division I-AA playoffs in 1984. Archie Cooley, who was the head coach at MVSU from 1980 to 1986, was the architect of the pass-oriented offense that utilized the skills of Totten.

Totten played professionally in the Canadian Football League (CFL) with the BC Lions (and Toronto Argonauts before moving on to the National Football League (NFL), as a replacement player for the Buffalo Bills during the