

Either way the administration or media try to spin it, a ransom was paid. For years and years, the United States Government has held a long-standing policy of not paying ransom for prisoners, but our legacy has quickly diminished.

The President continues to invest our trust and money into Iran, a country that is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Why in the world is our President rewarding Iran for its bad behavior?

This cash transaction sets a dangerous precedent for Americans abroad and our national security. I won't stand for this type of deceit by our Commander-in-Chief. That is why I urge my colleagues to support and pass the Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act. The name of the bill says it all.

#### COMMEMORATING THE HISTORIC SEASON OF THE BALTIMORE ORACLES

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the historic season of the Baltimore Oracles, my staff's congressional softball team and the victors of the 2016 Congressional Softball League championship. I was going to bring the trophy down, but it is much too big and much too heavy to carry.

Mr. Speaker, the Oracles vanquished their opponents this season, achieving an astounding 19-1 record. Led by co-captains Peter Gelman and Katie Teleky, and shadow-captain Raymond O'Mara, the team was a perfect blend of stout defense and potent offense.

Mike Pulver, Anna Killius, Paul Kincaid, and Lucinda Lessley held down the infield, while Andy Allen, Max Frankel, Brian Kaissi, and Zach Weber roamed the outfield. Big bats littered the lineup, but the batters were always ready to oblige the team's heart and soul, Tim O'Neil, and hit just a single.

Other contributors integral to the team's success include Kate and Adrienne Star, Evan Horn, Jake Barr, Will Pisano, Julia Kandel-Krieger, James Howard, Becky O'Mara, Alex Bond, and Winston, the team's ever-chipper mascot.

Mr. Speaker, the Baltimore Oracles are champions, and that is truly world class.

#### IMPLEMENTING THE VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, more than a year ago, Congress passed and the President signed into law an overhaul of veterans' health care. The Vet-

erans Choice Program nominally gave our Nation's veterans more health provider and service options. However, despite having more than a year to implement it, local VA facilities are refusing to work with new providers to get veterans the care they need. The VA claims its hands are tied, but by what?

Through the Veterans Choice Program, the men and women who have served our country are entitled to vital home care services that are critical to follow-up care and medication adherence assistance, especially for disabled veterans and those without access to transportation.

My conversations with the VA have yielded only excuses. Our vets deserve results.

I ask again, how many veterans are waiting for physician visits? How can the VA sit on its hands while our Nation's veterans wait and suffer?

I ask my colleagues to join me. Let's be a voice for our veterans and demand the VA give these heroes access to and reimbursement for the care they need and deserve.

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#### PRESERVING CASTNER RANGE

(Mr. O'ROURKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 110th anniversary of the Antiquities Act, 100 years of our National Park Service, and to thank our current President and administration for doing more than any administration before them to strengthen these two assets that we have in our country.

But I also ask this administration to set the standard for the next 100 years to ensure that public places like Castner Range in El Paso, Texas, fully tell the national story of the first Americans who were here more than 8,000 years ago who left their impressions of this great land and to ensure that every American has the chance to enter our public lands like the fourth and fifth graders at Collins Elementary who, under the direction of Mrs. Guay, left their impressions of Castner Range. This is a class that is 93 percent Mexican American, 75 percent below the poverty line, and precisely the population that we want to see in our national lands and public parks going forward.

Preserving Castner Range forever is a means to set the stage for the next 100 years of success for our national parks and our national lands.

#### CELEBRATING UNC CHARLOTTE'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the University

of North Carolina at Charlotte as we commemorate its 70th anniversary.

I am proud to be among the 122,000 living alumni of UNC Charlotte and to be the first elected to Congress, though I am sure I won't be the last.

My alma mater was founded by the visionary Bonnie Cone in the wake of the Second World War as a service to returning veterans pursuing higher education. The lasting legacy that continues to guide the university is best expressed in one word, "opportunity."

Opportunity characterizes the futures being built each day on campus. Opportunity describes the powerful economic impact this university has on one of the Nation's fastest growing regions. UNC Charlotte has grown into its distinctive role as a research university in areas like big data, energy, and cancer prevention, focused clearly on the opportunities and needs of the future.

Mr. Speaker, while still a relatively young university, UNC Charlotte is one of the leading American universities of the 21st century. I am pleased on behalf of the university family and all of Niner Nation to say the future is ours. Go Niners.

#### REMEMBERING JACQUI ELLIS

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the members of the Ninth Congressional District are in mourning this morning. We are saddened by the passing of our Chief of Staff, Ms. Jacqui Ellis. Mr. Speaker, she was more than a Chief of Staff. She was one of my dearest and closest friends. She was a mentor to many of the people on the Hill and especially those who worked with her in my congressional office.

She made a difference in the lives of people. She was there to be of assistance to those who needed help. And 1 minute will never give me enough time to express the love, the affection, and to thank all of the many people who have given their condolences and their sympathies, so we will have a Special Order next week at which Members of the House will be permitted to come to the floor, and we will make our comments then.

But I do want to say this: she met the measure of life that Ruth Smeltzer called to our attention:

Some measure their lives by days and years, Others by heartthrobs, passions, and tears. But the surest measure under God's sun Is what in your lifetime for others you've done.

Jacqui, we love you, and we thank you for what you have done for others in your lifetime. We know that while physically you are not with us, spiritually you will always be with us. God bless you.

#### HELP PREVENT VETERAN SUICIDE

(Mr. TIPTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1