

health and well-being of women across America.

HONORING ROTARY DISTRICT 7150  
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

**HON. JOHN KATKO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 16, 2017*

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Rotary District 7150 of Central New York as it hosts Rotary International President-Elect Ian Riseley of Australia.

This weekend, Rotary International President-Elect Riseley will address incoming club presidents at the Multi-District President-Elect Training Seminar and People of Action Dinner in my district in Syracuse, New York. I am proud to see local members of Rotary District 7150 of Central New York honored during this, the centennial of the Rotary International Foundation.

Rotary International is home to more than 35,000 clubs worldwide, including 43 clubs in District 7150 of Central New York. The Rotary's mission of "service above self" is exemplified in our local Rotary Clubs' work assisting veterans in need, recognizing the hard work and success of high school students, restoring our prized parks and waterways, and partnering with local food pantries to reduce hunger throughout the 24th District.

With over 1,200 Rotary members locally, Central New York is a better place because of the work these individuals do for our community. I applaud the members of Rotary District 7150 of Central New York for their service, fellowship, and passion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BILL JOHNSON**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 16, 2017*

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 155.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 16, 2017*

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, on March 15, 2017, I missed the voting session. If present, I would have voted as follows:

YES—H.R. 132—Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office Conveyance Act of 2017

YES—H.R. 648—To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskaadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir

YES—Motion to Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MISSOURI WHITEWATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

**HON. JASON SMITH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 16, 2017*

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Missouri Whitewater Championships celebrating their 50th year March 17 through 19, 2017. The races are held at the Millstream Gardens Conservation Area of the Saint Francis River near Fredericktown, Missouri.

The Championships continue a tradition begun in 1968, when the first Saint Francis River Whitewater Slalom Race was held. Since then, the event has expanded its scope and attracts beginners and seasoned competitors from other states and countries. Even Olympic-class paddlers have used this race as training preparation for future Olympic Games.

The event first begun by the Meramec River Canoe Club is now hosted by the Missouri Whitewater Association. It comes together as 100 volunteers set up the race course, provide safety, judge, time, and score the participants while hundreds of spectators cheer.

For providing sportsmen with the thrill of competition on the Saint Francis River for half a century and enhancing tourism for Madison and surrounding counties through its annual Whitewater Championships, I am happy to congratulate the Missouri Whitewater Association today before the United States House of Representatives.

HONORING THE LIFE OF NILS  
MICHAEL DECKER

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 16, 2017*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of Mr. Nils Michael "Mike" Decker of Fresno. Mike Decker passed away on Tuesday, February 14, 2017 in Fresno, California.

Mike was a wonderful, kind man and a dedicated educator. Mike was born in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. His career in education began at St Alphonso's School in Fresno, California followed by Orange Center School in Fresno.

Mike then served 25 years as Principal and Superintendent at Laton Unified School District in Fresno County. In addition, Mike also served on my State Assembly Staff as District Director.

In addition to his friends and family, Mike was adored by his students. Mike positively influenced the lives of thousands of children with this commitment to education and he helped many young people reach for the stars.

Nils Michael Decker is survived by his wife of 52 years, Diana Decker, his son, Timothy J. Decker, his son, Scott A. Decker and his wife, Maria and his daughter, Katherine Decker. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Michael Hill, Jady Garret, Nicholas Decker and his great granddaughter, Neelia Grace Hill.

Mike's sister, Margo Bellman and his brother Gordon Decker both of Michigan also survive him.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring the life and career of Nils Michael Decker, a hero to his family, a wonderful role model for educators and exemplary father, grandfather, great grandfather and friend.

INTRODUCING THE AFRICAN  
DESCENT AFFAIRS ACT

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 16, 2017*

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to note my introduction of the African Descent Affairs Act, as we continue to highlight the International Decade for People of African Descent.

We have seen a sharp increase in racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of discrimination across the world over the last year. Human rights violations emanating from racial prejudice and discrimination have negatively impacted people of African descent around the world, resulting in racial bias and disparities in education, employment, health, housing, justice, and other sectors. We must act now to reverse these disturbing trends. The International Decade for People of African Descent provides an opportunity to not only draw attention to these inequities, but to also join efforts with countries around the globe to develop and implement national strategies honoring the vast contributions of people of African descent and to combat continuing issues of prejudice and discrimination such as those currently gripping our nation.

To aid these efforts, I have introduced the African Descent Affairs Act. The Act seeks to improve the situation of people of African descent around the world by establishing within our State Department a Global Office of African Descent Affairs to establish global foreign policy and assistance strategies for people of African descent; creating a "Fund" to support antidiscrimination and empowerment efforts by African descent led civil society organizations; and requiring Annual State Department Human Rights Reports to include a section on discrimination faced by people of African descent. I believe that U.S. foreign policy strategies such as these have improved the situation of vulnerable groups internationally and would greatly assist in responding to increasing levels of prejudice and discrimination faced by people of African descent around the globe.

The State Department has already launched many successful initiatives that have aided vulnerable populations, such as the Office of Global Women's Issues, the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, the Special Representative to Muslim Communities, and the LGBT Global Equality Fund. Implementing a Global Office of African Descent Affairs will continue this tradition and facilitate the full and equal participation of people of African descent in society, promote knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contributions of people of African descent, and strengthen and implement legal frameworks that combat racial discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will embrace the challenge of combating prejudice and discrimination across the