

CELEBRATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARAB PEACE INITIATIVE

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution Celebrating the Importance of the 15th Anniversary of the Arab Peace Initiative as a Meaningful Effort by Arab Countries to the Commitment of Peace in the Middle East.

I recently travelled to Israel for the 18th time as a Member of Congress. While in Israel and Jordan, I attended a number of bilateral and multilateral meetings focused on security and the outlook for the region in the coming year. I always welcome these opportunities to meet with senior leaders on such a wide range of issues, and our conversations touched on political developments, regional security in the Middle East, the peace process, and strengthening the bilateral relationships between the United States and these nations.

Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be a major challenge, I believe we must stay actively involved in peace negotiations. I am happy to say that recently, Israel and some Muslim-majority Arab nations in the Middle East have made progress in regional cooperation. I believe that, using the Arab Peace Initiative as a baseline, these recent developments present a renewed opportunity for progress—one that we cannot afford to miss.

Mr. Speaker, my resolution highlights the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and urges the nations to continue the hard work of fostering stronger relationship. Under the right circumstances, the Arab Peace Initiative allows for gradual progress towards the normalization of bilateral relations between Israel and its neighbors. We all know that the relationship between America and Israel is paramount, and I have faith that, in time, the relationships between Israel and other nations will also strengthen. I commend the regional countries that have taken steps to facilitate the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while simultaneously strengthening regional security through discussions with the State of Israel. I urge all parties to continue these important dialogues.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's ascension to the Presidency of the Arab League. The United States established relations with Jordan in 1949 and our countries have a long history of cooperation. Jordan has taken on an important role in pursuing progress for the region. I congratulate my friend King Abdullah II and wish Jordan the very best as it assumes this new leadership role for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this resolution today, and recommend its expeditious consideration and passage.

CELEBRATING JUANITA SEARFOSS ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. JACKIE WALORSKI**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Juanita Searfoss, a great Hoosier who is celebrating her 90th birthday today.

Juanita M. Searfoss was born on March 27, 1927, in South Bend, Indiana, to Dorothea M. and Herschel A. Sharp, who were loving Christian parents. She also had three brothers, David C. Sharp (deceased), Jerry D. Sharp of Bonita Springs, Florida, and Ronald (Mary) Sharp of South Bend.

On October 7, 1950, she married Clifford L. Searfoss. They were married for 55 years until his death in 2005. Their loving marriage produced six children, 16 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

Juanita graduated from Central High School in South Bend and Indiana University in Bloomington with a degree in medical technology. She worked for the South Bend Medical Foundation, retiring after 21 years of service.

Juanita has always been active in her church—she has been a member of the Sonlight Fellowship Wesleyan Church since the age of ten—and various volunteer and service organizations. For many years she has planned and made a meal every two months for Hope Ministries. She was a member of Faith in Action, did respite care for several families, and helped support several missionaries, as well as the Northern Indiana Food Bank and Chiara House. She is a member of the St. Joseph County Home Extension Normain club, a Bible study group, Gleaners, a Red Hat Society group, and a hospice organization, just to name a few. In 2008 she was awarded the Golden Hoosier Award for her volunteer work. She still loves to read, travel, play the piano, crochet, and spend time with her family and friends.

Many have benefitted from her strong faith, her kind and caring nature, her quiet wisdom, and her unconditional love.

Happy 90th Birthday, Juanita.

IN HONOR OF DONNETTA WALSER

**HON. SUZAN K. DeBENE**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Ms. DeBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Donnetta Walser.

Donnetta spent her life dedicated to improving her local community. Her 28 years as an educator, including many in the Monroe School District, is a testament to her steadfast commitment to her students.

After her career in public education, Donnetta spent 32 years in public service, serving on the Monroe City Council, Monroe Civil Service Commission, U.S. 2 Safety Coalition, Snohomish County Senior Services Board of Directors, Snohomish County League of Women Voters, and two terms as the Mayor of Monroe.

Donnetta had such a positive impact on so many people throughout our community. Her

kind and compassionate spirit and willingness to take on tough tasks will surely be missed. Although she has passed on, her memory and impact will continue to live on.

My heart goes out to her husband: Fred; her sons and daughters-in-law: Scott and Stacey and Matt and Kimberly; her grandchildren; and all of her family and friends.

CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEENS HELPING KIDS

**HON. FILEMON VELA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Teens Helping Kids as they celebrate their 10th year of service.

Located in the South Texas city of Brownsville, Teens Helping Kids was founded in 2008 by five high school juniors. Since its formation, the club has raised and donated funds to organizations that provide services to children, and its teen members have volunteered time and energy to helping those who need it most.

Each year, Teens Helping Kids partners with Cameron County Children's Advocacy Centers, Inc. to host the Annual Sports Celebrity Dinner, which has raised more than \$800,000 since its inception. This year, its members plan to meet their \$1,000,000 goal. The success of this event will be felt region-wide as Teens Helping Kids will be donating proceeds to local children's nonprofits such as Ozanam Center, Tip of Texas Family Outreach, Monica's House, and Maggie's House.

Teens Helping Kids has made a lasting, positive impact in our community, and they will continue to play a role in the improvement of South Texas. I rise today to congratulate them for their decade of success.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ROBERT GEORGE EVANS, JR.

**HON. TODD ROKITA**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a decent and generous American, Mr. Robert George Evans, Jr., who passed away on March 16, 2017 surrounded by his loving family.

Robbie was a lifelong New Orleanian. He graduated from Archbishop Shaw High School and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management from the University of New Orleans. After college he rose to the position of Vice President for the family steel drum business, Evans Cooperage. He later founded Con-Tech International which began selling industrial steel drum parts and related items. Under his leadership, the company has grown into an international corporation supplying steel and hundreds of custom manufactured parts to various industries across the globe.

I met Robbie through a mutual friend, Jerry Bonnet. It was a few years after Hurricane Katrina and I was still Indiana Secretary of State. My office had "adopted" an inner city school in Indianapolis, and I heard that Robbie and New Orleans were doing some amazing