

was killed by the state of Georgia in September, and now her daughter has died. Correia was a brave and courageous woman who was her brother's most stalwart advocate for clemency. She was an angel of mercy who sacrificed her health to win her brother's life.

For a state which could have used its power to do what is right, the outcome is tragic. But for the Davis family, if it had to be this way, it is an elegant ending. God has finally accomplished what the state of Georgia could not. In his mercy he granted their prayers to be all together again—happy, healed and whole. They leave us the lessons of their lives and a legacy of struggle that strengthened a movement for repeal of the death penalty in this country. I send my deepest condolences to the Davis family and to Martina Correia's son, who needs our support in this time. May God richly bless you for the sacrifice you as a family have made in the long, hard struggle for justice in America.

CAMP ASHRAF IN IRAQ

HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, the clock is running down for the 3,400 residents of Camp Ashraf in Iraq. I share the concern of many of my constituents and others across our country and around the world for the status of those living in Camp Ashraf. It is my fear that if the Iraqi government follows through on their threat to shut down the camp that we could be facing a monumental human rights tragedy. I have joined many of my colleagues in calling for access to the camp by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is indefensible that UNHCR has not been given access to those in Ashraf. This in itself seems to be a violation of international human rights law.

It is imperative that the government of Iraq revoke its year end deadline for the closure of Ashraf. UNHCR must be provided sufficient time to process each and every one of these individual cases. Regardless of the State Department's position concerning the legal status of MEK, the department has both a moral and legal responsibility to do everything in its power to ensure that UNHCR is provided access to the camp.

It is my hope that when Prime Minister Maliki visits with President Obama, that he will agree to remove the December 31 deadline for the closure of Camp Ashraf. There is still time to avoid a catastrophe and the Secretary of State should act with the assurance that decisive action will have the support of Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.

IN RECOGNITION OF MARY ANN CHRISTOPHER

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Mary Ann Christopher, who, after 29 years of service, will depart her posi-

tion as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Visiting Nurse Association Health Group, Inc. to assume the same position at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Her dedication to the well-being of New Jerseyans in need deserves this body's recognition.

During her decade long-tenure as CEO, Mrs. Christopher spearheaded a geographic expansion which transformed the agency from a two-county provider to a statewide organization. Mrs. Christopher led the development of a continuum of services, including home-health care, hospice care, community-based prevention and outreach initiatives, clinics for the poor and school-based health care. In recent years, she skillfully steered the organization through a myriad of federal and state policy changes, directed a second capital campaign that resulted in the agency's new, modern headquarters, and launched a name change and comprehensive branding initiative.

Mrs. Christopher is a leading national voice on a wide range of health care issues. She regularly interacts with decision makers on Capitol Hill, and in Trenton to develop legislative and regulatory policies to enhance the quality of health care for New Jersey citizens. Her public policy work has included advancement of public-private partnerships to address the growing nursing shortage, expansion of telehealth services, ensuring adequate reimbursement for Medicare home-health care, and improving Medicaid care programs strengthening her state's human services system for the most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in recognizing and thanking Mrs. Mary Ann Christopher for her 29 years of service to New Jersey and her dedication to providing healthcare to those in need.

THE ATTAİN ACT

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Achievement Through Technology and Innovation Act of 2011 (ATTAİN).

Given the challenges facing job seekers in our current economy, technology skills are now more critical than ever. As a nation, we need to prioritize technology literacy, and it should begin with our educational system.

Whether students are preparing for college or planning to go straight into the workforce, we must provide them with the high tech skills employers and the economy demand. Obtaining these critical skills is of particular concern to low income and minority students who are falling further behind their higher income peers in terms of 21st century college and workplace skills.

Not only has technology literacy become a critical life skill, but studies show technology also has a tremendous impact on student learning. In this era of ever shrinking school budgets, overcrowded schools and over-extended teachers, technology provides an opportunity to improve academic outcomes for our students.

I had the opportunity to see this first hand at the LA School for Global Studies in my district. This school seamlessly integrates tech-

nology in the classroom and I was amazed to see students that were previously low performers academically and at risk of dropping out of school, engaged and eager to learn. My visit underscored the promise that initiatives like the ATTAİN Act hold for closing the student achievement gap.

The ATTAİN Act amends the current "Enhancing Education Through Technology" program in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to better target federal education technology resources to raise student achievement, ensure high quality teaching and improve our education system while ensuring our students are college and career ready and prepared to compete in the digital economy.

The bill authorizes up to \$1 billion in annual funding to train teachers, purchase education technology hardware and software, and to support student technological literacy.

Under the bill's provisions, if Congress appropriates more than \$300 million annually for ATTAİN, 60% would be used to purchase new technology and train teachers on how to effectively use these new tools.

The remaining 40 percent of ATTAİN funds would be distributed through competitive grants that encourage schools to undertake comprehensive, technology based reform initiatives that have been proven to increase student achievement.

However, should Congress appropriate \$300 million or less for this program annually, the Secretary of Education would allocate the entirety of the funding to conduct a competition and award grants to those states with the most promising initiatives to improve K-12 education through the use of technology. This provision is intended to ensure that there is adequate funding to impact student outcomes during lean fiscal years.

It is my hope that through this competition states and districts across the country will be compelled to evaluate their technology use and work to integrate it effectively throughout all classrooms, and especially those that are currently underserved by education technology.

Mr. Speaker, we know that when teachers are properly trained and schools are properly equipped with technology, students are engaged, eager to learn, and ultimately better prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. I believe that the ATTAİN Act is integral to our continued efforts to deliver all students the world class education they expect, need and deserve. I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this important bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF MICHAEL B. MITCHELL

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Police Sergeant Michael B. Mitchell, who is retiring after nearly 30 years of law enforcement service, with 23 years of that service to the City of Fairfield. As his colleagues, friends and family gather together to celebrate the next chapter of his life, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting this outstanding public servant and defender of peace and safety.

Michael started his law enforcement career as a Police Officer with the City of South San Francisco for six years. On September 5, 1988, he was hired as a Police Officer with the Fairfield Police Department. As an officer, Michael worked in various capacities that included Patrol, Traffic, and Investigations. In 1998, he completed the distinctive Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)—Robert Presley's Institute of Criminal Investigation (ICI) certification course with a specialty in homicide investigation.

Michael was promoted to Police Corporal on September 8, 2000, and served in Patrol, Youth Services, and earned a City Manager's Commendation in 2003 for his contribution and dedication to the City of Fairfield Driver's Training Program. On January 5, 2007 Michael was promoted to Police Sergeant and supervised teams on Patrol and then the Traffic Unit beginning in 2008. As the Police Department experienced changes in leadership and command staff, he stepped in and assisted city management by filling the gaps and acting as a Police Lieutenant and managing Patrol Operations when needed. In 2009, he earned the California Office of Traffic Safety's Award of Excellence for his outstanding motivational and leadership skills. His guidance and efforts dramatically increased the successful implementation and completion of traffic safety activities in the City of Fairfield.

Michael has been a valued employee and his commitment to the community was evidenced on a daily basis. He was a loyal representative of the law enforcement community and admired for his hard work, dedication, and positive work ethic.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly honored to pay tribute to this dedicated public servant. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in wishing Michael B. Mitchell continued success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MR. BOB NICKELSEN

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60 years of outstanding public and volunteer service of my fellow Oregonian and friend, Mr. Bob Nickelsen. I would like to celebrate and pay tribute to Bob's loyal service to my hometown of Hood River, Oregon and to pay tribute to a man who embodies the selfless spirit of service to others.

In 1951, Bob first joined the West Side Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter. In 1961, Bob was appointed fire chief of the department, a position that he held until 1980. During his tenure as fire chief, the West Side Fire Department expanded its services by erecting a second firehouse, which now bears his name. Under Bob's guidance, the fire department also began dispatching first responder personnel to aid emergency medical calls with the Hood River Ambulance Service.

For the past 30 years, he has also served as an elected member of the West Side Fire District Board of Directors. To this day, Bob continues to put himself in harm's way as a volunteer fire fighter. His leadership allowed this small rural volunteer fire district to stay in step with current developments in the fire

sciences and provide the professional level of support that the community so richly deserves.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Nickelsen's civic responsibilities do not end at the firehouse doors. He was a commissioner for the Port of Hood River for over 15 years and has served on numerous local agricultural boards and committees. He was previously recognized as the Hood River Valley's "Orchardist of the Year." As a leader within the local farming community, Bob has contributed much of his time and effort to the economic development of Hood River and the Columbia Gorge.

On December 10, the West Side Fire Department will once again honor Bob with a banquet on his behalf I invite my colleagues to join me in praising Bob Nickelsen for 60 remarkable years of dedicated public service, his numerous contributions to his community, and for his outstanding character as a citizen of Hood River.

Theodore Roosevelt once said that "the first requisite for a good citizen is that he should be willing and able to pull his own weight." Bob continues to far surpass this noble standard.

SYNTHETIC DRUG CONTROL ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2011

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to H.R. 1254, the Synthetic Drug Control Act of 2011.

While I support sensible restrictions on dangerous substances, I am concerned about the unintended consequences this bill could have on medical research. This bill has the potential to make these kinds of substances extremely difficult for researchers to obtain. In fact, many researchers have expressed concern that the list in this bill is too broad and would restrict their ability to conduct important experiments.

Additionally, this legislation would bypass the scientific and medical review process that is in place for adding substances to Schedule I. Making decisions without scientific review is problematic.

It is important to note that states are free to make decisions regarding these kinds of substances. I supported the reasonable step New Jersey took when it banned the synthetic drugs known as "bath salts" this summer.

Since this bill would bypass scientific review and could hinder much-needed research, I urge my colleagues to vote no.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ETHEL MACLEOD HART SENIOR CENTER

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Ethel MacLeod Hart Senior Center, a popular gathering location for Sacramento's seniors. It is a great pleasure to recognize the center's 50th Anniversary, as it

has provided a positive environment that enhances and affirms older adults' dignity and promotes their independence. As the Hart Center's supporters and patrons gather to celebrate this milestone, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in honoring the center's leadership and service to the Sacramento community.

The Sacramento Senior Center was formed in 1961, and was later renamed the Ethel MacLeod Hart Senior Center in honor of Hart's generous legacy to the city's senior community. From its earliest beginnings, the center has helped to foster a welcoming environment that supports older citizens' interests and needs, a place in which senior citizens feel a connection to each other and receive validation from the wider community.

Over the last fifty years, the Hart Center has provided a wide variety of recreational and health services. The center's programs include flu clinics, legal workshops, the Friendship Café, computer classes, and a hearing impaired club. In addition, the Center's staff publish a monthly newsletter called the Hart Cornerstone that announces community events, and provide fitness classes that promote physical exercise and encourage healthy aging. The Hart Center has also partnered with a number of organizations to meet the needs of local seniors, including the Gray Panthers, Older Women's League, Sacramento Senior Legal Hotline, California Health Advocates, Social Security, the Franchise Tax Board, and many others.

As a member of Congress, I have had the privilege of visiting the Hart Senior Center on numerous occasions. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to speak at an Older Women's League monthly meeting at the Center, and talk about legislative proposals that affect Sacramento's senior community. Additionally, last summer the Hart Senior Center hosted a Social Security 75th anniversary party where we celebrated the program and reflected on its importance.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the Ethel MacLeod Hart Senior Center on its 50th anniversary. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Hart Center's role of providing the community with much needed services.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 1995, when the last attempt at a balanced budget amendment passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 300–132 the national debt was \$4,801,405,175,294.28.

Today, it is \$15,046,397,725,405.16. We've added \$10,244,992,550,110.88 dollars to our debt in 16 years. This is \$10 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.