quickly diagnose the problem the individual had encountered allowed him to connect constituents with the proper staff member to begin the task of resolving the issue.

Dennis should be proud of the service he has provided to our District and country. It has been an honor to serve with Dennis and as I retire from office I wish him the very best in the future. Western North Carolina is a better place because of his efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking Dennis Berman for his hard work on behalf of all of Western North Carolina and to wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $ 10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $16,244,014,083,153.54. We've added $5,617,137,034,240.46 to our debt in 3 years. This is $5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

TRIBUTE TO DODIE COLLINS

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2012

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of my Congressional Staff who have served with me over the past six years while I have been in office. A Member of Congress' most important responsibility is to provide exceptional constituent services and my staff is second to none in providing the best assistance to everyone in our District. I take great pride in the work that each one has done on my behalf and on behalf of everyone in the 11th Congressional District of North Carolina.

Each District Staff member has shown a strong sense of dedication in meeting the needs of each and every one of our constituents. They often go well beyond the call to make sure each constituent is treated fairly and respectfully by our government agencies and that they receive appropriate resolution. I owe a debt of gratitude to each one of them for the support and friendship which they have shown me while I have served in Congress.

Dodie Collins has served as a member of my District staff since July of 2011. Dodie came out of retirement from a career with the State of North Carolina to bring added expertise to my District office in an array of areas. Dodie's addition enabled our office to provide increased and expedited assistance by working directly with our State of North Carolina contacts when casework called for a state-directed resolution. Through Dodie's strong grasp of casework management she was able to direct constituents in the appropriate direction, ensuring a more timely and successful outcome for many.

Dodie should be proud of the service she has provided to our District and country. It has been an honor to serve with Dodie and as I retire from office I wish her the very best in the future. Western North Carolina is a better place because of her efforts and I will cherish the memories of serving with Dodie and the team by my side.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking Dodie Collins for her hard work on behalf of all of Western North Carolina and to wish her continued success in her future endeavors.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO ENSURE THAT THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY COMPLIES WITH THE FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2012

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to require the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) to adopt the Federal Acquisition Regulations, the set of rules that govern all aspects of the acquisition process for virtually every federal executive branch agency. Significant failures in MWAA's contracting policies and practices point to a need for substantial reform in MWAA's acquisition process. However, despite being created by Congress, leasing federally owned land, and benefiting from significant federal taxpayer funds, MWAA is not subject to federal procurement laws or regulation. This oversight has left MWAA without ample guidance for its board members and employees. Many of the problems that have drawn criticism of MWAA could be eliminated if the Federal Acquisition Regulations were made applicable.

MWAA is an independent public body created by Congress under the Metropolitan Washington Airports Act of 1986 (Airports Act), which authorized a compact between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia. MWAA, with 1,400 employees, leases and manages Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Washington Dulles International Airport. In addition to managing airports, MWAA is responsible for the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, with an estimated cost of $5.8 billion, including $977 million in federal funds.

A recent Department of Transportation (DOT) Inspector General report, ''MWAA's Weak Policies and Procedures Have Led to Questionable Procurement Practices, Mismanagement, and a Lack of Overall Accountability'' (Report Number: AV–2013–006) (IG Report), found that ''MWAA's contracting policies and practices are insufficient to ensure compliance with the Airports Act and the lease agreement between DOT and MWAA.'' For example, the Airports Act and lease agreement require MWAA to award contracts over $200,000 competitively to the maximum extent practicable. However, the IG Report found that MWAA recently awarded two-thirds of its contracts exceeding $200,000 with limited competition. The IG Report also noted that MWAA awarded many contracts with no formal solicitation, and that MWAA's Contracting Manual does not require public notification of sole-source contracts over $200,000.

The lack of transparency and competition on MWAA contracts is inconsistent with continuing ownership of the airports by the federal government, MWAA's creation by Congress, and the significant federal taxpayer dollars for which MWAA is responsible. The IG Report's conclusion that current procurement procedures are inadequate requires a response that definitively settles the procurement issues surrounding MWAA. It makes no sense for MWAA to attempt to reinvent a new set of procurement procedures and ignore the very thorough and tested Federal Acquisition Regulations, which provides legal guidelines for every aspect of procurement and that maximizes fairness and transparency.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill. I will seek passage before the end of the lame duck.

TRIBUTE TO ARLENE GONZÁLEZ-SÁNCHEZ

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2012

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and to honor Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, a visionary leader in our community and an inspiration to all of New York.

Ms. González-Sánchez brings more than 30 years experience in the field of behavioral health administration, policy development, medical research, and expertise integrating accessible systems of care for New Yorkers. She is a Cabinet-level, Chief Executive Officer overseeing a premier addiction services system with more than 1,500 programs and 35,000 paid and volunteer professionals which serve 110,000 New Yorkers daily.

Ms. González-Sánchez possesses a Masters of Social Work degree in Administration/Community Organization from Hunter College School of Social Work, as well as a Masters of Science degree in Cell Biology and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Fordham University. She is a licensed Masters Social Worker.

As Commissioner of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, OASAS, her overall vision is to transform the fragmented system of care to a comprehensive, integrated, patient-centered, family-focused system that is accessible and responsive to the multiple and complex needs of the behavioral health population of today. Under her executive leadership, she has established the Enhanced Oversight and Monitoring Initiative to improve programmatic and fiscal accountability and quality service delivery throughout the OASAS system.

Before coming to OASAS, Ms. González-Sánchez was Commissioner of the newly merged Nassau County Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities with the Nassau County Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services in Long Island. Ms. González-Sánchez also held a faculty appointment at Cornell University Medical College as an Associate Research Scientist where she spent eight years