

shape of Texas. He has also become popular as a cornerstone for community service.

After living in the U.S. for a while, he became frustrated with the fact that voter turnout in American elections was so low. Because of this, he hosted a voter registration drive at his hotel. To encourage residents to participate, he offered a free breakfast for registering.

Philippe is extremely active as this year's president of the Humble Intercontinental Rotary and has been named Rotarian of the Year on occasion. He is especially fond of the Rotary's student exchange program which inspired him as a high school student to move to the United States. His life was forever changed by the impact of Rotary International and he takes great pride in giving back to the organization.

With a heart as big as Texas, Philippe has been a Good Samaritan for many years to many people. After Hurricane Rita hit East Texas, Philippe opened his conference room for storm evacuees, fed them and provided mattresses for them to sleep on.

Philippe is one of the first people to volunteer his assistance and resources if a local nonprofit organization needs help. He has collected thousands of toys for Toys for Tots. He is a major sponsor of the annual tradition known as Fill the Bus which encourages residents to donate school supplies for children. He gave out free breakfast and one-night stays at this hotel for those that donated supplies. The event literally fills a school bus with supplies for children at Humble ISD.

His largest contribution to Humble ISD was a \$100,000 grant in hotel services. The grant saves the district money on lodging, catering and other services which allows more school resources to be spent on education instead of expenses. There are far too many examples of Philippe's humble generosity and philanthropy to list. His personal impact in the community has touched thousands of lives and residents in Kingwood, Humble and the surrounding areas. We are forever grateful for his efforts.

Today, I salute Philippe Cras for his contributions to the community, warm hospitality and for making the eternal flame of the American Dream burn brighter each day. His life is an inspiration to us all to challenge ourselves to be better citizens for the sake of our communities.

And that's just the way it is.

#### YOUTH VIOLENCE

### HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2007*

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, we are at a critical juncture in our nation as we attempt to find solutions to the growing scourge of youth violence. In October of this year a student shot four others and eventually himself at SuccessTech Academy in my congressional district in Cleveland. Earlier this year Seung-Hui Cho, a Virginia Tech student who in April killed 32 students and faculty before shooting himself to death. And most recently, a teenager with an assault rifle opens fire on holiday shoppers in a department store in middle America.

Over the past ten years more than 30 shooting incidents have occurred in our na-

tion's schools. These incidents have occurred all over the country. While some thought Columbine was an aberration, it has become clear that this is a serious and growing problem in our country that must be addressed.

It is important to point out that in the late 80's and early 90's when overall crime was going down, youth and young adult arrest rates were increasing.

We must ask ourselves why. What makes a 14-year old feel so disengaged from society that he wants to shoot others and himself? When do we stop allowing the broad distribution of firearms under cover of the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms? When do we start to recognize that youth with mental illnesses must be treated as at-risk? Where is the breakdown in the moral fabric that used to hold our society together?

America is looking to Congress to come up with comprehensive solutions. We must begin to deal with this problem on three levels: in the community, within our families and on an individual level.

As adults, we must take a greater interest in the lives of our children. When I was a child, not only were my parents looking out for me, but the entire neighborhood served as my surrogate mothers and fathers. If I was out in the street doing something I wasn't supposed to, not only would I get chastised by my parents, but everyone in the community would get on my case. At the time it may have seemed harsh, but I now realize it was done out of love.

We must take the same approach with our children today. Many of the children who committed these heinous acts showed signs of emotional disturbance prior to the incident. I have to wonder if we as adults and even their peers in school were paying closer attention, could these tragedies have been prevented.

It is time for us as members of Congress to take a serious look at this issue and determine how we can provide support to parents, teachers and our communities as a whole in ending the rampant youth violence that has become so prevalent in our society.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2007*

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 1155, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3985, the Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act, I was not present. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

#### CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF MICHAEL K. WHEELER FROM THE JOHN DINGELL VA MEDICAL CENTER, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

### HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2007*

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Michael K. Wheeler, who is retiring on January 3, 2008, as Director of the John

Dingell VA Medical Center in Detroit. Mr. Wheeler's career is marked by numerous hospital administration roles and a dedication to our men and women who have served in the Armed Forces.

Mr. Wheeler was born in Detroit and moved to Canton, Ohio, when he was a teenager. He received a BS in business administration from the University of Dayton and an MA in hospital administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati. Mr. Wheeler began his career as a Hospital Administration Specialist in the U.S. Air Force and has served in an impressive number of VA Medical Centers, including Durham, North Carolina; Portland, Oregon; Prescott, Arizona; Coatesville, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; and Dayton, Ohio. Prior to assuming the position of Director of the John Dingell VAMC, Mr. Wheeler was the Medical Center Director of the VAMC Battle Creek, Michigan. Additionally, Mr. Wheeler has conducted seminars in postgraduate education in management principles, strategic planning, and quality assurance for the VA, Duke University, and the American College of Health Care Executives.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Wheeler was more than prepared when he began his tenure at the John Dingell VAMC in 2001. There, he oversees all operations of the 108 bed primary, secondary, and tertiary care medical center which provides acute medical, surgical, psychiatric, and other inpatient care as well as both primary and specialized outpatient services, including substance abuse, among others. His job necessitates flexibility and strong decisionmaking abilities.

Mr. Wheeler is a patriot and a role model for us all. His colleagues and associates know him as an approachable, humorous, and very hard-working Director. I am proud to call him a friend. The John Dingell VAMC has been lucky to have him for these past 6 years. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Wheeler for his dedication to the VA and to the men and women who have served our country. I wish him well as he moves on to new adventures.

#### RECOGNIZING LCPL JOSHUA BLEILL

### HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2007*

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lance Corporal Joshua Bleill, a veteran of the Iraq War, a fine Marine and a bright light to many of us. I have had the privilege of meeting this impressive young man and I am honored to enter the following poem written by Burt Caswell of the Capitol Guide Service into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

#### A BRIGHT LIGHT

A . . .

A Bright Light!  
Shining, ever into that night!  
Day and Night . . .

A . . .

A Shining Star!  
A hero, who will go far!  
Who with his fine heart, stands way above  
par!

Who to our world . . .  
So shows what is right!