

Since that date millions of Americans, driven by a deep sense of responsibility and compassion for their neighbors, have risked their lives on a daily basis to ensure the safety of others. Currently, over a million Americans serve their communities as fire fighters.

I would like to specifically honor the following individuals who have been named Firefighters and Rescue Persons of the Year by the McDowell Fire and Rescue Association: for the Ashford North Cove Fire Department, Thomas Swofford; for the Crooked Creek Fire Department, Glen Anderson; for the Dysartsville Fire Department, Billy Driggers; for the Glenwood Fire Department, Ryan Spencer and Curtis Grant; for the Hankins North Fork Fire Department, Charles Parker; for the Marion Fire Department, Amy Hudgins; for the Nebo Fire Department, Alan Snypes; for the Old Fort Fire Department, Nick Stafford; for the P.G. Fire Department, Bradley Wyatt; for the Sugar Hill Montford Cove Fire Department, David Patton; for the Woodlawn Fire Department, Lucas Davis; for the McDowell County Rescue Squad, Randy Freeman.

I want to offer tribute to the following First Responders of the Year: for the Ashford North Cove Fire Department, Bradley Washburn; for the Crooked Creek Fire Department, Kirk Lunsford; for the Dysartsville Fire Department, Jeff Walker; for the Glenwood Fire Department, Gene Morgan; for the Hankins North Fork Fire Department, Jimmy Hardin; for the Marion Fire Department, Phillip Finley; for the Nebo Fire Department, Shane Kirkpatrick; for the Old Fort Fire Department, Roy Crisp; for the P.G. Fire Department, Danny Killough; for the Sugar Hill Montford Cove Fire Department, Chris Parker; for the Woodlawn Fire Department, Gary Cook.

I would also like to recognize Brian Lonon, McDowell County Paramedic of the Year, and Derek Carlson, McDowell County Telecommunicator of the Year.

It is with great respect and gratitude that I commend these brave and dedicated fire and rescue workers. I am honored to be able to stand with the McDowell Fire and Rescue Association in recognizing their hard work and service.

HONORING THE REVEREND WILLIAM A. LAWSON ON FATHER'S DAY

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I would like to honor a man who exemplifies what it means to be an excellent father—a man who is a community leader, an upstanding and moral man, and a positive role model for our youth. The Reverend Dr. William A. Lawson, who lives in my congressional district, has done great things, and I am proud to express my congratulations to him for all he has done for our community.

Reverend Lawson is a tremendous father figure and fixture in our community. He has been married to his wife Audrey for over fifty years and admirably raised four children. He was the founding pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church and continues to lead that con-

gregation. Reverend Lawson has also been deeply involved in the community even outside of his church, having conceived and organized the United Way's Houston Homeless Initiative, which raised over \$4 million in a four-year period. He also organized the Houston area's largest and most productive scouting program, leading to his receipt of the 1991 Silver Beaver Award in support of scouting. Clearly, Reverend Lawson has demonstrated the very kind of leadership that we need in our communities to help our youth develop into successful adults.

Reverend Lawson has long been a valued member of the community, and rightly so. On this occasion of Father's Day, I would like to recognize Reverend Lawson for all of his accomplishments and urge people across America to look to leaders such as Reverend Lawson as role models for their work in inspiring and engaging our youth to live productive, positive lives.

REAUTHORIZE THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I join Representatives CASTLE, FERGUSON and SHAYS in introducing the Assault Weapons Ban Reauthorization Act of 2008. This September will mark the fourth anniversary of the expiration of the landmark 1994 Assault Weapons Ban. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms reported that crimes involving assault weapons dropped by two-thirds while the Federal ban was in effect. As the Nation witnesses a dramatic spread of violent gang activity, it is imperative that we take action to keep automatic weapons out of the hands of these criminals. It is high time to bring back the ban.

This bill will prohibit the domestic manufacture and sale of military-style semi-automatic assault weapons such as AK-47s and UZIs, as well as high-capacity ammunition clips that hold more than ten rounds. It also includes weapons designed to fit accessories such as flash suppressors, silencers, and bayonets—accessories that serve no legitimate purpose outside the military and law enforcement.

The Mexican government is currently engaged in a violent war against heavily armed, extremely violent drug traffickers. Just recently the cartels assassinated the Mexican equivalent of our FBI Director. They are now threatening President Calderon's life.

These gangs operate in every major metropolitan area in the United States, and are increasingly active in suburban America where the local police are ill-equipped to meet this threat. Restoring the assault weapons ban will help level the playing field for these police as they work to keep our communities safe and gang-free.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this commonsense legislation.

HONORING THE REVEREND ROBERT JEFFERSON ON FATHER'S DAY

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I would like to honor a man who exemplifies what it means to be an excellent father—a man who is a community leader, an upstanding and moral man, and a positive role model for our youth. The Reverend Robert Jefferson has done great things, and I am proud to express my congratulations to him for all he has done for our community.

Reverend Jefferson has long devoted himself to improving our community, especially for our young people. Along with serving as the pastor of the Cullen Missionary Baptist Church, which I attend, he is the Founder/President of the Ministry Advisory Council, Special Projects Director to the Houston Ministers Against Crime, and the Founder/President of A Brand New City. He has played a critical role in creating the Teen Court, a program to be implemented with the Houston Independent School District that would allow students to be punished for infractions without developing a criminal record. I have personally observed Reverend Jefferson's work with children and other at-risk individuals and I can testify that he is an exemplary leader for our young people.

Reverend Jefferson has long been a valued member of community, and rightly so. On this occasion of Father's Day, I would like to recognize Reverend Jefferson for all of his accomplishments and urge people across America to look to leaders such as Reverend Jefferson as role models for their work in inspiring and engaging our youth to live productive, positive lives.

CELEBRATING 80TH BIRTHDAY OF GERALD (JERRY) KOPEL AND 56TH ANNIVERSARY OF JERRY AND DOLORES KOPEL

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize a dual celebration for two distinguished members of the First Congressional District. This week the Kopel family of Denver celebrates the 80th Birthday of Gerald (Jerry) Kopel and the 56th Anniversary of the marriage between Jerry and Dolores Kopel.

Jerry and Dolores have led an interesting and engaged life together, balancing careers in journalism, law, politics, and policy. They were the original "power couple" long before dual careers were more outwardly prevalent and socially acceptable. What is truly admirable is the Kopels managed to pursue these accomplishments while raising a family and contributing to the broader well-being of our community.

Dolores and Jerry met at the University of Colorado when Jerry was managing editor of the Silver and Gold newspaper and Dolores was a reporter. Jerry graduated from the University and Dolores transferred to the University of Denver College of Law. They married at