

Sudan's president, Salva Kiir. Mr. Abdel Aziz also said that if things don't change, "fires will just break out everywhere, here, in Blue Nile, in Darfur," according to someone at the meeting.

"We, the people of Sudan, are ready to remove them," vowed Mr. Abdel Aziz, the person said. "We have guns."

Josh Kron contributed reporting from Parieng, Sudan.

INTRODUCTION OF FIRE GRANTS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2011

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to support our Nation's first responders. The Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2011 reauthorizes two programs—the Assistance for Firefighters Grant, AFG, Program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, SAFER, program—that were created to help local fire departments across the country maintain and increase their capabilities to do all that is asked of them, including fighting fires and responding to medical emergencies and disasters.

Maintaining the equipment, training, and personnel to safely and swiftly respond to calls for assistance is increasingly difficult. Fire departments around the country have been forced to lay off firefighters and do without needed equipment and training. The fire grant programs have played an important role in helping local fire departments overcome some of these challenges, providing over \$6 billion in assistance since 2000. These grants have been essential to maintaining public safety in many communities.

Fire is a serious problem in the United States, killing over 3,000 people a year—a rate higher than all other industrialized countries. In addition, approximately 20,000 people are injured, over 100 firefighters are killed in the line of duty, and \$10 billion in property is lost each year due to fire. Statistics show that minorities and low-income Americans are disproportionately the victims of fires. In addition to providing the resources necessary to ensure our fire departments have the equipment and personnel they need, the AFG program supports fire prevention and safety activities to help reduce the numbers of death, injury, and loss.

The bill I am introducing today is nearly identical to the bill that moved through the Science and Technology Committee and then passed the House by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote last Congress.

The good news is that, even in these times of increasing partisanship, this common sense bill has once again garnered widespread support. I am pleased to be joined by the bipartisan co-chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus in introducing the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act, along with other members from both sides of the aisle who have long supported these important programs.

We need to ensure that our firefighters and emergency medical personnel have the tools that they need to protect us. This legislation will do just that.

As the Ranking Member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee,

which has jurisdiction over these programs, I look forward to working with my colleagues to put this important bill on the fast track and ensure that these critical programs are reauthorized as expeditiously as possible.

CONGRATULATING CHRISTOPHER ERBE FOR OBTAINING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SANDY ADAMS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mrs. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Christopher Erbe for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Throughout the history of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout has only been attained through dedication to concepts such as honor, duty, country and charity. By applying these concepts to daily life, Christopher has proven his true and complete understanding of their meanings, and thereby deserves this honor.

I offer my congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF NAVESINK HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY NUMBER 1

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Navesink Hook and Ladder Company #1 of Middletown, New Jersey, as its members gather to celebrate its 125th Anniversary. Since its founding in 1886, Navesink Hook and Ladder Company has faithfully protected the local residents, businesses and visitors of the Township. Their honorable and courageous actions are undoubtedly deserving of this body's recognition.

The Navesink Hook and Ladder Company was founded on May 1, 1886 and remains an all-volunteer organization. Throughout their rich history, the members of this fire company have exemplified their unwavering dedication and service toward members of the community. They have risked their lives to respond to various emergencies involving fire, carbon monoxide, motor vehicle accidents and other various rescues. Their responsibilities have begun to expand beyond the borders of Middletown and have also assisted neighboring towns including Highlands, Rumson, Fair Haven, Keansburg, Sea Bright and Atlantic Highlands. Navesink Hook and Ladder Company promotes a proud and longstanding history of valor and sacrifice. Their heroic actions while serving their community is a testament to the selfless actions of the members to protect and serve the residents of Middletown. The members of this fire company continue to exemplify their unwavering dedication and service for their fellow citizens and community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Navesink Hook and Ladder Company #2 on its 125th Anniversary and thanking the men and women who have served and protected the Township of Middletown.

HONORING THE LIFE OF REV. BEN COX, SR., ORIGINAL FREEDOM RIDER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of a trail-blazer and humanitarian, Reverend Ben Elton Cox, Sr. Reverend Cox's life mission was to fight for the equal rights of blacks in southern states where Jim Crow laws and intimidation tactics hindered and denied blacks the right to beaches, hotels, schools, restaurants, and jobs that whites enjoyed. Though confronted with hatred, violence and blatant racial discrimination, Reverend Cox's courageous acts and unyielding belief in equality for all people subsequently effected change across this country.

Reverend Cox was a fervent community activist and devoted NAACP member. He was not only a leader of the Freedom Rides in Little Rock, but was one of the original 13 Riders on the first Congress of Racial Equality Freedom Ride in 1961. His role during the movement helped amplify the voice of oppressed blacks in the south and shape future civil rights policy in the United States that would advance the rights and freedoms of African Americans.

Family, friends, and freedom riders described Reverend Cox as one of the young Americans who repeatedly exhibited courage and bravery in the cause of Civil Rights. Ben Cox and 12 others faced violent opposition and discord from Klansmen and angry mobs during the Freedom Rides traveling throughout the south. In his own words, Reverend Cox said he'd been in 37 states for civil rights and in jail 17 times and that his life had been threatened 87 times in writing. Sacrificing their safety and endangering the lives of their families—harassed, jailed and brutally beaten by their detractors, Reverend Cox and the Freedom Riders were on the "front line" of a civil war and remained steadfast in the fight against racism, discrimination and inequality in the segregated south and around the country. Ben Cox embodied courage and was a champion of the struggle for human rights.

Again, I ask that my colleagues please join me in saluting the life and legacy of Civil Rights leader and Freedom Rider Rev. Benjamin "Elton" Cox, Sr.

ELECTION SUPPORT CONSOLIDATION AND EFFICIENCY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I voted against H.R. 672, a bill that ends the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), an independent and bipartisan commission whose main function is to improve and oversee elections in the U.S.

This bill would transfer much of the EAC's responsibilities and funds to the Federal Elections Commission (FEC), whose main priority

is not election administration, but rather enforcing federal campaign laws. In a letter to the House Administration Committee, the FEC noted that they could “contract with outside groups to fulfill aspects of the EAC’s responsibilities.” Facilitating free and fair elections is an inherently governmental function that should not be outsourced.

The world’s leading democracy should not affix a price on free and fair elections, but that is exactly what Congress does in this legislation. In effect, H.R. 672 says that preventing another crisis like the one we saw during the 2000 presidential election—where millions of Americans did not have their ballots counted due to failed voting machines—is too expensive and is not a priority.

It is deeply ironic that just as Florida—the state responsible for the bulk of voter complications in 2000 that prompted Congress to pass the Help America Vote Act—signs into law onerous voter registration requirements, Congress is dismantling a bipartisan solution that helped ensure the effective administration of elections.

This is a politicized bill that is well wide of the mark of true government reform. Simply repealing the EAC, like Republicans did with the Presidential Election Fund earlier this year, further undermines America’s democracy and is a step in the wrong direction. I oppose this legislation.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVANT CHURCH OF SAINT ALEXANDER’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the parishioners of the Servant Church of St. Alexander on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of service to the residents of Southeast Michigan.

Originally named the Church of St. Alexander, the Parish was founded on June 21, 1961 at 27835 Shiawassee Road in Farmington Hills, where it remains to this very day. Founded with 600 participating families, the Church has experienced both times of trial and prosperity in its life, but has always remained strong with dedicated parishioners who have worked hard to strengthen their community. St. Alexander has been led by four different pastors during its 50 years in Farmington Hills and under the leadership of the Reverend Robert McGrath. St. Alexander has continued to flourish and bring in congregants from well beyond its own parish, with almost half of its members coming from outside the Parish.

The hallmark of St. Alexander is its service programs—first fully realized under Reverend James Wright, who served as pastor for 25 years and weaved service into the very fabric of the Servant Church of St. Alexander. Under his leadership St. Alexander launched its food pantry which has operated for over 25 years and fed nearly 2,600 hungry families in 2010 alone. In addition, the Church also collects and distributes food baskets on Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas to assist families in need during the holidays.

While St. Alexander’s food pantry and holiday food drives deeply impact many in our community, it is not the full extent of the charitable work in which the Church and its parishioners are engaged. Every spring the parish puts together teams that support Rebuilding Oakland County, a program that assists low income home owners with much needed renovations and improvements across Oakland County. The parishioners of St. Alexander also support annual blood drives and even take a percentage of the Church’s weekend collections and send them to the local chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, an organization that provides service to individuals and families in need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Servant Church of St. Alexander and the remarkable impact its parishioners have had on so many residents in our Southeast Michigan community. The parishioners’ commitment to serving our community is truly a most valued virtue at a time when so many families in Michigan are struggling. I congratulate the parishioners and leaders of St. Alexander on achieving this great milestone and wish them many more years of fellowship and productive service to our community.

THE BROUGHTON HIGH SCHOOL BAND OF RALEIGH, NC HEADS BACK TO THE TOURNAMENT OF ROSES PARADE

HON. RENEE L. ELLMERS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Broughton High School Band of Raleigh, North Carolina and Band Director Mr. Jeffrey “JR” Richardson.

The Needham B. Broughton High School in Raleigh will be representing North Carolina and the Mid-Atlantic States for the 2012 Tournament of Roses Parade. In an almost unheard of occurrence, the Broughton Band has been invited back after their successful 2008 Parade showing. Being invited back after only 4 years is a great accomplishment considering that most bands, if ever asked back, are usually asked back many years later. The Broughton Band was one of three bands that made it through the entire 6 mile parade in 2008 without one student having to leave the parade route early; the only other two bands were the Marine Band and the Virginia Military Institute Band. The students of the Broughton High School Band have not only worked very hard to be invited back to the Tournament of Roses Parade, but they have also raised the money to pay their own way to California.

I am very pleased to recognize the Broughton High School Band of Raleigh, North Carolina for this prestigious invite. I wish them the best as they continue their preparation for this exciting event. An event of this magnitude is certainly something in which the school, the students, and the state of North Carolina can have great pride.

CONGRATULATING SKYLER JAMES REESE FOR OBTAINING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SANDY ADAMS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mrs. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Skyler James Reese for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

As the son of a retired Air Force officer, Skyler showed his determination to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout by continuing his scouting in five different states where he had to prove himself each time. Throughout the history of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout has only been attained through dedication to concepts such as honor, duty, country and charity. By applying these concepts to daily life, Skyler has proven his true and complete understanding of their meanings, and thereby deserves this honor.

I offer my congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for the future.

HONORING SENIOR OFFICER JOHNNY JONES OF THE GRAPEVINE POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR 31 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honor to rise today to recognize Senior Officer Johnny Jones of the Grapevine Police Department. Mr. Jones is a dedicated public servant who is retiring after 31 years of remarkable service to the Grapevine community.

Mr. Jones was born in Denton, Texas, spending his childhood and youth growing up in Grapevine. Soon after graduating from Grapevine High School, Mr. Jones took a position on June 19, 1980 with the Grapevine Police Department as a dispatcher. On June 16, 1981, upon completing the police academy, Mr. Jones was appointed to the Grapevine Police Department. Since then, Mr. Jones has attained the highest level of law enforcement certification as a Texas Peace Officer and Master Peace Officer by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education. A critical member of the Grapevine Police Department, Mr. Jones has served in various roles. These include the positions of dispatcher, patrol officer, motorcycle officer, detective, and crime prevention officer.

In 1998, Mr. Jones left the police department to join the City of Grapevine’s Information Technology Department as a customer service manager. One year later, Mr. Jones returned to the police force with added skills and expertise. Not long after returning to the police force he became a Certified Forensic Computer Examiner, one of only approximately 700 in the world. Mr. Jones has used his expert knowledge and skills in forensic computer examination to aid the Grapevine Police Department in capturing numerous on-line sexual predators and other felons.

Over the course of his 31-year career, Mr. Jones has remained committed to the service and protection of the City of Grapevine and its