RECOGNIZING CONSTITUTION DAY

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of Constitution Day, happening this Saturday, September 17, 2011, celebrating the 224th anniversary of our Founding Fathers' signing of the Constitution. Constitution Day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the past success of our founders in the form of the Constitution, the two centuries of progress since, and the future promise of the United States under the guidance of the document given to us in 1787.

Constitution Day reminds us to review the whole document and what it means to our country, and shows that support for the Constitution requires more than chanting slogans at a political rally. Calling yourself a ''strict constitutionalist'' means nothing if you don't bother to read the entire Constitution and fight for everything it includes, not just the portions that fit neatly with your personal political philosophy.

As an Iowan, and a student of the Constitution for more than 30 years, I take pride in repeating our state's motto: ''Our Liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain.'' Constitution Day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the document that prizes our personal liberties and preserves our rights in a system of laws that recognize the individual spirit of every American, and has made our Nation a shining beacon in the world. The development of the Constitution has recognized the rights of all men and women, and created a system of equality that has helped our Nation move past prejudice and discrimination in some of our darkest hours.

Constitution Day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the system of justice for all by creating an impartial judiciary and a system of law that recognizes the rights of every citizen to file a grievance against their government or fellow man. It lets us reflect on the goals of a responsive executive, a representative legislature, and a responsible judiciary working on behalf of all citizens to preserve their rights, respect their liberties, and allow for progress. It reminds us to all work harder to support the progress of the United States.

I ask all my colleagues and constituents to join me in recognizing Constitution Day and reflecting on the lasting work of the Founding Fathers.

RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF CHARLES AND ELIZABETH SESSIONS OF PACE, FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize Charles and Elizabeth Sessions on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Charles and Elizabeth Sessions were married on September 15, 1961 by Reverend Bo Lowery at Pace Assembly of God. Charles and Elizabeth are deeply rooted in Northwest Florida and are lifetime residents of Pace, Florida. As active members in the local community, they were entrepreneurs and owned several businesses in the area. Charles won the first Pace Pioneer Award from the Pace Chamber of Commerce and served on the first planning board for Santa Rosa County, all with Elizabeth by his side.

Charles and Elizabeth are parents to three children, Greg and twins Kim and Ken; and have two grandchildren, Chloe and Brandon. Now retired, Charles and Elizabeth enjoy spending their time with their family, traveling, and their favorite pastime—fishing on Lake Kissimmee or on the river in Camden, Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize Mr. and Mrs. Sessions on their 50th wedding anniversary. They are truly an outstanding family from the First District of Florida. My wife Vicki and I wish their entire family all the best.

A TRIBUTE TO DECORAH HIGH SCHOOL

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellence in education in Iowa, and to specifically congratulate Decorah High School in Decorah, Iowa. The United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today that Decorah High School has made the list of the Nation's 2011 Blue Ribbon Schools.

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement. In the words of Secretary Duncan, ''National Blue Ribbon Schools are committed to accelerating student achievement and preparing students for success in college and careers. Their success is an example for others to follow.''

Decorah High School is among the state's highest performing schools. Decorah High School students scored in the top ten percent in Iowa with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds improving their performance on state assessments or nationally normed tests. Additionally, the students at Decorah High School averaged a full three points higher on their ACT scores than the national average.

Decorah High School's principal Kim Sheppard and one additional teacher will be invited to Washington, DC for the awards ceremony, to take place on November 14th and 15th. At this ceremony, Decorah High School will receive a Blue Ribbon Schools plaque and a flag to signify its elite educational status.

I consider it a great honor to represent Decorah High School Principal Kim Sheppard, the teachers, students, school board members and administrators of the Decorah Community School District in the United States Congress. I wish Decorah High School continued academic excellence as they provide a positive impact on future leaders of our state and country.

A TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT DAKOTA MEYER

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Dakota Meyer, U.S. Marine Corps, who has virtuously served the United States and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Today, Sgt. Meyer will receive the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest medal for bravery, for his courageous actions while serving as a member of the Marine Embedded Training Team 2–8, Regional Corps Advisory Command in Kunar Province, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

On Sept. 8, 2009, Meyer's actions saved the lives of 13 U.S. troops and 23 Afghan soldiers.

Taliban insurgents were dug into the high ground and hidden inside a village, pouring down deadly fire at Afghan forces and their American advisers. Armed militants swarmed the low ground to try to finish off the troops.

Meyer's team was pinned down near the village. Defying orders to stay put, Meyer set himself in the turret of a Humvee and rode straight into the firefight, taking fire from all directions. He went in not once, but five times, trying to rescue his comrades.

During about six hours of chaotic fighting, he killed eight Taliban militants and provided cover for Afghan and U.S. servicemen to escape the ambush.

We owe our freedom to exceptional soldiers, like Sgt. Meyer, whose bravery and heroism, and the bravery of those who he fought alongside of, will forever be remembered and appreciated.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring Sergeant Dakota Meyer for his steadfast commitment to the U.S. Marine Corps, his fellow soldiers, his nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MR. RALPH D. REID

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today in recognition of the achievements of Mr. Ralph D. Reid, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for Sprint Nextel. In Ralph's role, he has responsibility for Community Affairs, Employee Engagement and Volunteerism, CSR strategy and operations, and Corporate Diversity and Inclusion. He also directs Sprint's philanthropic activities as President of the Sprint Foundation and works diligently for the residents of the Fifth District of Missouri, which I am honored to represent. This week, Mr. Reid is to be inducted into the Missouri Walk of Fame during a reception as part of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference, an event held to honor the achievements of African-Americans who have made significant contributions to Missouri and the nation.

Ralph graduated from Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama with a Bachelor of