

costars and crew with graciousness and humility.

It was not until 1987 that Mr. Griffith was recognized with a People's Choice Award for his work on the television show "Matlock". He was able to show his diversity as the righteous lawyer Ben Matlock, best known for always coming out on top. Most impressively, Mr. Griffith showed the strength of his character by overcoming leg paralysis from Guillain-Barre Syndrome right before taking part in the show.

Throughout the rest of his career Mr. Griffith never stopped surprising his audience. He released many different albums, and his 1996 release "I Love to Tell the Story: 25 Timeless Hymns" went platinum.

In 2005 he was honored by President George W. Bush with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Mr. Griffith truly personified grace and decency, his memorable performances brought millions of Americans joy while demonstrating the finest qualities of our country. Even today, that trademark whistle still makes us think of a sense of neighborliness and small town charm of years past.

Andy Griffith was a true jack-of-all-trades, who demonstrated talents both on screen and off. He started his own production company, completed an award-winning gospel music album, and later became involved in political activism. Yet audiences could be sure that Mr. Griffith would bring the same infectious energy and charisma to each endeavor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Andy Griffith's family and loved ones. I hope they can find some comfort in knowing the incredible legacy he leaves behind in hearts across the nation.

HONORING THE LIFE AND
ACHIEVEMENTS OF MARC TITUS

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 9, 2012

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, President Kennedy said, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers," and I rise today to remember and honor my dear friend, and a model public servant, Marc Titus.

Marc Titus was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1966. A Warren G. Harding High School graduate, he attended Youngstown State University, and served in the United States Marine Corps as a Nuclear Biological Chemical Specialist.

In April of 1991, Marc continued to serve his community by joining the Warren City Fire Department and becoming a member of the Honor Guard. For the last 21 years, Marc has been a respected leader and role model for new firefighters joining the force.

Over the years Marc has received numerous awards for his service. In 2009, he received the State Fire Marshal's Award for Heroism after pulling 4 people from a burning group home in Warren, Ohio.

Marc served as the president of the International Association of Firefighters Local 204 during the last 8 years of his life. During the recent Issue 2 campaign, Marc showed leadership and dedication to his profession and to his fellow firefighters with tireless work on their behalf. He always went above and beyond the call of duty striving to continually keep the Warren City Fire Department moving forward.

Marc Titus passed away on June 7, 2012 at the age of 46. Marc was a great friend of mine and taught those of us that worked with him that our lives were supposed to be spent serving others. Marc spent his life teaching us that real heroes are the ones that use their time and talents improving the lives of those in their family, community, and country. Marc did this and it was most apparent with how he dedicated his life to his 3 daughters: Jennifer, Julia, and Lindsey. We offer our condolences to them and to Marc's parents. Although his life was short, he taught us much. This hero will be sadly missed.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA'S BE-
LOVED JAMES "J.E."
BLANKENSHIP

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 9, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Northwest Florida's beloved James "J.E." Blankenship. Mr. Blankenship served the Northwest Florida community for more than 40 years in the Holley-Navarre Fire District. In addition to his service to the community, Mr. Blankenship was also a loving and dedicated husband, father and grandfather; he is survived by his wife, Kathey (Taffy), his sons, Jeremy and Jody (Carisa), and his grandchildren, Dakota, Haleigh, Morgan and Caden.

Mr. Blankenship was born in Troy, Alabama on July 17, 1949. In 1963, he became one of the original members of the Holley-Navarre Fire District volunteer force, while working at the manufacturing company Solutia, where he retired from in 2005 to start his own small business. Mr. Blankenship continued to serve the people of Holley-Navarre as the Fire District transitioned from a volunteer to a professional force, and he did not take his duties to protect the community lightly. J.E. was an inspiration to his fellow firefighters, and he worked tirelessly to ensure that the Holley-Navarre Fire District had the necessary training and tools to serve the community. Through his tireless work on behalf of the Holley-Navarre community, Mr. Blankenship rose to become Assistant Fire Chief, and in 2003 he became a Fire Commissioner. His position as a Fire Commissioner ensured that Mr. Blankenship was able to continue his work serving the community by overseeing the budget and operations of the department.

To some, J.E. Blankenship will be remembered as a man of conviction and a steadfast advocate for fire safety in his community. To others, he will be remembered as an inspirational leader who fought to ensure that the fire department was equipped to meet its mission. To his friends and family, he will be remembered as a devoted husband, loving father and proud grandfather. His immense contributions to the Northwest Florida community will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress it is an honor to recognize the life of J.E. Blankenship and his living legacy. My wife Vicki and I offer our sincere condolences to the entire Blankenship family.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4348,
MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 29, 2012

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would like to voice my support for the transportation reauthorization conference report. While I was disappointed in how House Republicans broke with the tradition of working in a bipartisan fashion on transportation policy, I appreciate the Senate's bipartisan approach, which is responsible in large part for the bill we have today. In addition to the transportation reauthorization, we have been able to come together to prevent student loan interest rates from increasing, and secure a five-year reauthorization of the Flood Insurance program. It is my hope that moving forward we can look at this conference agreement as a model of what can be accomplished legislatively by seeking bipartisan, bicameral common ground.

But as with all legislation, there were many compromises, and there were several aspects of the report which I believe could further be improved. On balance, however, the conference report contains needed policy direction and authorizations that warrant support.

Most importantly, transportation reauthorization will provide much needed stimulus to local economies, and get those in the construction and manufacturing industries back to work. This bill will create or save more than 2 million jobs, and authorize highway and transit programs for more than two years. The bill will also make key reforms in consolidating transportation programs, cut red tape, and leverage federal resources to expand public-private partnerships in transportation.

This is also a good bill for Texas. Under this agreement, Texas is slated to receive more than \$3 billion annually in highway formula funds. Unlike the original House legislation, H.R. 7, this conference agreement preserves mass transit funding through the Highway Trust Fund. Funding for mass transit is critical for my district, and Texas as a whole, as we work to develop solutions to alleviate congestion and alternative modes of transportation to accommodate a growing population. Texas has also been very successful in utilizing Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, TIFIA, funding, and will continue to benefit under the conference agreement, which increases funding for the TIFIA program to \$750 million for FY 2013 and to \$1 billion for FY 2014. It also increases the maximum share of project costs that can be funded through the TIFIA program from 33 percent to 49 percent. This agreement will give the Texas Department of Transportation, local transit agencies, and contractors some much-needed certainty as they plan transportation projects.

This agreement will also give 461,533 Texas students relief from the impending student loan interest increase. I am very pleased that provisions blocking the rate hike are included in the conference report. In Texas and all across the country, students and recent college graduates are now facing the highest