

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Honor America for their tireless efforts to remind us all what it means to be an American and celebrate it.

HONORING BILL SCHWERI

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tireless advocate for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Mr. Bill Schweri, who is retiring from his position as the Director of Federal Relations at the University of Kentucky. As Bill retires, I want to personally thank him not only for the work he has done to better the Sixth District of Kentucky and the broader Commonwealth, but also for the relationship he has developed with me and my staff.

Bill has always been happy to spend the time to get to know my office, and we all have fond memories of working with Bill—not to mention remembrances of chatting about UK sports in the front office. Bill's ability to build lasting relationships is unmatched, and he leaves large shoes to fill.

Few people have contributed as much to our Commonwealth and UK as Bill has during his 42 years at the University including the last 20 as Director of Federal Relations. His contribution to the success of UK—from the NCI designation at the Markey Cancer Center to advances in energy research to programs in agriculture and education—speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me and the Big Blue Nation as we honor Bill Schweri and wish him a long, happy, and healthy retirement.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS
RESOLUTION, 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the President's request to train vetted, moderate Syrian rebels, as I believe it is only one step in the right direction and it's supported by military experts.

Tremendous oversight is going to be necessary in this effort. And unfortunately I fear, as do many experienced generals and military personnel, that it's part of a strategy that's insufficient to secure America's national security.

The President's stated objective is to destroy ISIL. However, I believe that this overall strategy, and the means requested, are not enough to meet this objective.

The current strategy relies on U.S. airpower in support of local forces. This is not a counterterrorism effort, and to destroy ISIL, it's necessary to have strong coordinated ground troops.

The local ground forces the President is planning to rely on appear currently unready and they will need to operate with a strong central command and control.

The President's strategy does not provide for U.S. Special Forces and the backing of our ground troops, even though our military leaders have repeatedly suggested the exact recommendation.

Our security is too important to base military strategy on political calculations. Our strategy must be firmly rooted in what is necessary in order to complete the mission and to ensure our security. From Clausewitz to Powell, military leaders have preached the necessity of decisive force.

I served in Iraq. We heeded this wisdom and committed to win with decisive force. We acted on military reality and not political risk.

We can do this again and fulfill the American objective to destroy ISIL, but we must commit ourselves to do what is necessary. Not only what it takes, but whatever it takes.

HONORING DAVID SMITH

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize David M. Smith, President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Ventura County, on the occasion of his retirement from an exemplary career in dedicated public service and outstanding contributions to our community.

David Smith has had a remarkable and distinguished career as a community leader and philanthropist. His passion and dedication to the mission of United Way has fostered a thriving and prosperous environment for numerous community programs that serve the citizens of Ventura County with an array of invaluable health and human services.

In October 2001, David took on the weighty role and responsibilities as the leader of United Way of Ventura County, and served as a steward for the organization's vision and shared purpose of changing lives and shaping communities.

With over a decade of dedicated service, David has created a powerful strategy of encouraging individuals to invest in their community's needs, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all of Ventura County's residents and delivering positive community results.

In addition, David holds an impressive volunteer track record as a member of the Board of Directors of Ventura County Economic Development Association. David has also served as a board member of the Boys & Girls Club of Camarillo, the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce, Casa Pacifica, the Ventura County Taxpayers Association, and the American Cancer Society Ventura County Chapter. For his selfless service to his community, the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce honored David Smith as Man of the Year in 2010.

David Smith's lifetime career of leadership, community service, and his many accomplishments are indicative of his unwavering commitment and dedication to Ventura County. As this chapter in his career comes to an end, I want to express my sincere appreciation for David's years of honorable and selfless dedication that greatly contributed to the success of the United Way of Ventura County, and our community as a whole.

For these reasons, I commend David M. Smith and wish him the best in all of his future endeavors.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION
FUND

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, on September 3, 1964, President Johnson signed the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) into law, establishing a dedicated and permanent means for the protection of America's irreplaceable recreational, natural, historic, cultural and outdoor resources.

The 50th anniversary is an occasion for celebration, but also a reminder that LWCF's authorizing legislation expires in within a year. As we commemorate LWCF's half-century track record of success, it is imperative to secure reauthorization of the program before that date.

LWCF is fully paid for without relying on the support of American taxpayer dollars. Every year, \$900 million of the many billions of dollars the U.S. Treasury collects from offshore oil and gas drilling is deposited into the LWCF trust fund. These revenues are a promise made to the many communities across America that rely on these resource lands, and on the conservation and recreation economies they support.

This arrangement has served our nation well, helping to realize a long list of conservation successes over the past 50 years without costing taxpayers a dime. This includes creating outdoor recreation opportunities in every state and 98 percent of counties across the country—opening up key areas for hunting, fishing, and other recreational access; supporting working forests and ranches; and acquiring inholdings and protecting critical lands in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, Civil War battlefields and other federal areas. From the Pacific Crest Trail to the North Cascades, the Mountains to Sound Greenway to Lake Chelan, the high quality of life and outdoor opportunities in Washington have been protected by LWCF.

Outdoor recreation activities in Washington directly support 227,000 jobs and consumers spend \$22.5 billion on outdoor recreation equipment, apparel, lodging, and other services, generating \$1.6 billion in state and local tax revenue. Further investments are needed to replace funds that have been redirected and to ensure that we can continue to protect our national treasures, such as the Yakima River Basin in my home state. This is an area not only used and beloved by hikers, campers, hunters, and fisherman but it also critical in providing drinking water and irrigation.

LWCF does more than simply add acreage to our public lands—it provides an entire suite of conservation tools to address national, state, local and regionally driven priorities across the country. These include working land easements that keep working forests in production and jobs in rural economies—rather than forcing family forest owners to subdivide and sell off portions of their land to developers. Additionally, these often include purchase of inholdings within the boundaries of existing public lands which make management more efficient by reducing the cost of fencing, boundary surveying, firefighting and other costs and ensuring access for land management.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary, the best way to honor the Land and Water Conservation Fund is to make sure Congress provides the necessary funding levels so it can continue its history of success for our great nation.

HONORING JIM REES

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jim Rees, who passed away on September 9, 2014, at his home in Markham, Virginia.

Jim served as president of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate for two decades, from 1994 to 2013. I had the privilege of working closely with Jim over the years on many important issues, especially working to improve historical literacy among young Americans. Jim was a tireless advocate of George Washington's legacy, his estate at Mount Vernon and the leadership virtues of our nation's indispensable founding father. Because of his work building Mount Vernon's endowment and revitalizing interest in the estate, Jim was called "an indispensable man to Mount Vernon in his time" by Barbara Lucas, regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, who spoke to the Washington Post about Rees' legacy.

Jim was beloved not only by the board of the Ladies' Association, staff and volunteers but also by all those who share his commitment to preserving the legacy of the Father of our Country. His passing is a loss to the Mount Vernon community and indeed the nation. I respectfully submit Jim Rees' obituary from The Washington Post and ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Jim's life and achievements.

[Sept. 13, 2014]

JAMES C. REES, 62, LONGTIME PRESIDENT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON, DIES
(By Emily Langer)

James C. Rees, who endeavored to keep George Washington first in the hearts of his countrymen, and particularly in the hearts of his country's tourists, as president for nearly two decades of the founding father's Mount Vernon estate, died Sept. 9 at his home in Markham, Va. He was 62.

The cause was multiple system atrophy, a neurological disorder, said his husband, Kirk Blandford.

Mr. Rees spent nearly his entire career at Mount Vernon, the stately home 15 miles outside the District in Virginia, where George Washington lived for decades and where he was buried after his death in 1799.

After working in the development office and as the estate's associate director, Mr. Rees became in 1994 Mount Vernon's executive director, a title later changed to president. He moved into a home on the grounds overlooking the Potomac River and became, he said, the public relations agent for the nation's first president.

The nonprofit Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, which has independently owned and maintained the property since 1860, credited Mr. Rees with leading fundraising initiatives that brought more than \$250 million to the estate. During his nearly three decades with the institution, its endowment grew from \$4 million to more than \$100 million, according to the group.

"It has been said that George Washington was the 'indispensable man,'" observed Barbara B. Lucas, the regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, adding that Mr. Rees "likewise was an indispensable man to Mount Vernon in his time."

Mr. Rees's tenure as president coincided with what he and other George Washington enthusiasts feared was a growing ignorance about American history, particularly among the young. Once, Mr. Rees encountered a group of students and began joking with them—"you know, playing off some of the Washington myths," he told the Weekly Standard.

"I said, 'Well, it's a good thing this isn't a cherry tree, or it might be in danger—you never know who might come chop it down.' And there was no reaction. Nothing. So I said, 'But I guess we could always use the wood to make some teeth.' Nothing. Blank stares."

Mr. Rees led a years-long mission to enliven the visitor experience at Mount Vernon and to invigorate the image of the president who lived there. Washington, Mr. Rees remarked, seemed to be locked in the national imagination as the rather dour-looking gentlemen on the \$1 bill.

"Washington was athletic, adventurous and risk-taking, known to be one of the finest horsemen of his day and willing to meet challenges head-on," Mr. Rees once told the New York Times. "Some have called him the nation's first action hero."

At the Ford Orientation Center, a building opened in 2006 with sponsorship from the Ford Motor Co., visitors watch a film described as an "action-adventure" movie about Washington's military exploits and personal life.

The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center, which also opened at Mount Vernon in 2006, includes theaters, interactive displays and galleries with artifacts from Washington's life, including the bedstead he used during the Revolutionary War, his sword and, perhaps best known, his dentures.

The teeth in particular represented a departure from what had previously been the organization's conservative presentation of the former president.

"We used to be so discreet that we didn't want to display Washington's dentures," Mr. Rees told the Times. "When we finally broke down and showed them, they turned out to be a sensation. That taught us something."

Mr. Rees also oversaw the restoration and reconstruction of Mount Vernon's whiskey distillery and gristmill. One of his last undertakings was fundraising for the \$106 million Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington, which opened in 2013, the year after Mr. Rees retired.

James Conway Rees IV was born May 5, 1952, in Richmond. The history textbooks he used as a youngster, he often said with chagrin, devoted significantly more space to Washington than can be found in books used today.

He was a 1974 English graduate of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg and received a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University in 1978. Before joining Mount Vernon in 1983, he did development work for William & Mary and for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Mr. Rees often reflected on the challenges of promoting Washington in the modern age.

"I suppose it has to do with lots of things," he once told the Weekly Standard. "The rise of social history—filling up history with all kinds of people who'd been ignored before means there's less room for old heroes. And I suppose it has to do with the end of the great man theory of history, too."

"But there's something else that worries me," he continued. "The qualities Wash-

ington possessed just aren't as appreciated as they were. Honesty. Good judgment. Modesty—my God, who in late-20th-century America gets credit for being modest anymore?"

In 2007, Mr. Rees published a book, "George Washington's Leadership Lessons: What the Father of Our Country Can Teach Us About Effective Leadership and Character."

Survivors include Kirk Blandford, his partner of 29 years, whom he married last year, of Markham; and a brother.

On one occasion, Mr. Rees was called upon to correct an oversight by Washington, who had borrowed from the New York Society Library "The Law of Nations," Emer de Vattel's 18th-century political treatise, and failed to return it.

By the time the matter came to Mr. Rees's attention, the item was more than two centuries overdue. He returned a copy to its rightful owner.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS
RESOLUTION, 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I support the core pillars of the President's plan to fight ISIS—the use of American surveillance, intelligence assets and air power to support the ground operations of the Iraqi army and Kurdish fighters in Iraq, and to strike ISIS military equipment, troop concentrations, and command and control in Syria. I also believe we should supply weapons to those groups in Syria, such as the Syrian Kurds, who have consistently fought ISIS, and whose priority is to defeat ISIS. I welcome the opportunity to work with my colleagues to revise the existing 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force to more clearly support these objectives, but to also ensure that U.S. ground forces are not engaged in combat in Iraq or Syria.

My one concern with the Administration's plan relates to the proposal to arm the so-called "moderate" Syrian opposition. I believe that it is a well-intentioned proposal that will have unintended negative consequences that will not serve our ultimate goal of defeating ISIS.

First, the primary objective of these Sunni Islamist fighters is the defeat of Assad and his Alawite dominated regime—not the defeat of ISIS. Since the start of the war there have been shifting alliances among these Sunni Islamist forces that include the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, different elements of the Free Syrian Army, the Islamist Front, Ahrar al-Sham and ISIS, among others. Their common cause and overriding objective is defeating Assad. Indeed, the commander of the Syria Revolutionaries' Front, Jamal Maarouf, one of the most militarily proficient commanders of the FSA, recently said that, "It's clear that I'm not fighting against al-Qaeda. This is a problem outside of Syria's border, so it's not our problem. I don't have a problem with anyone who fights against the regime inside Syria."

While there is no doubt that Assad is a brutal dictator, he does not pose the same threat to the United States as ISIS, and his forces have recently been battling ISIS. At this point, arming fighters whose primary purpose is to