

her team of teachers, administrators, and support staff, but also an example of the importance of continual education and self-improvement. Mrs. McDonald has continued her education with additional training on the Kindergarten Development Survey (KIDS), Comprehensive Literacy Model (CLM), and the Danielson Model on Teacher Evaluations, in addition to serving as the Bi-lingual Coordinator and primary grant writer for her school.

As the son of a public school teacher, I know the importance of having passionate and creative teachers in the classroom who are able to educate the next generation of Americans. For that reason, I am honored to join with the nearly 5,000 principals and education leaders of the Illinois Principals Association and the students and staff of Northview Elementary to honor Mrs. McDonald's many accomplishments, and to congratulate her on being named Elementary School Principal of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 16th District of Illinois, I wish to express our sincere thanks for all of the hard work Mrs. McDonald has done for our students and the Peru community. I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DARREN E. RUSSELL

**HON. BRAD SHERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 14, 2015*

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tenth anniversary of the death of Mr. Darren E. Russell, the son of my constituent, Ms. Maxine Russell.

In 2005, at the time of Mr. Russell's untimely death, many young U.S. citizens were employed as language instructors in China, due to increased demand for English language skills in connection with the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympics. Like many Americans, Darren sought out this opportunity to work in a different culture, and to improve ties between the United States and the people of China.

Darren was loved by his students, who gave him a Chinese nickname that translates to "White Rabbit." While he enjoyed teaching his students, his relationship with his employer was not good. He was reportedly required to work seven days a week, and was subjected to substandard working conditions by his employing school, the Decai English Language Institute. His employers seized and held his travel documents, including his passport.

Further, his employing school had failed to obtain the proper work documentation for Mr. Russell, making him essentially an illegal alien in the eyes of Chinese authorities. When Mr. Russell expressed concern about his working conditions, he was removed from his employer-provided apartment and placed in virtual detention by his employers at the Cathay Hotel in Guangzhou. While there, Mr. Russell was robbed, and he therefore lacked the financial means to arrange for his departure.

In a recorded message on his father's cell phone a few hours before his death, which was deemed a hit-and-run accident by local authorities, Mr. Russell expressed grave concern for his personal safety. He sought urgent

assistance from his family and the U.S. Consulate in order to return to the United States.

These circumstances raised suspicion that foul play was involved in his death. A subsequent autopsy was conducted by a board-certified pathologist in Los Angeles, California, in March of 2007. The pathologist concluded that Mr. Russell was murdered by blunt force trauma to the head; his injuries were found inconsistent with a motor vehicle accident by the pathologist.

Darren's mother has spent the ten years since April 14, 2005 seeking justice for Darren and the truth about what happened that day. She continues to seek information about the circumstances leading up to his death, and the inability of U.S. officials to render effective assistance to Darren after his pleas for help.

Darren is remembered by those who knew him as a caring and effective teacher, someone who tried to build bridges between the American and the Chinese people. I hope that both the U.S. and Chinese governments will assist his mother's efforts to determine what happened to her son ten years ago this week.

EQUAL PAY DAY 2015

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 14, 2015*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April 14th as Equal Pay Day 2015.

April 14th is not a random date of the calendar; today marks how far into the year 2015 a woman must work until her earnings for 2014 and these additional months match what a man earned in 2014 alone.

In my home state of California, for every dollar a man makes, women still make just 84 cents. The gender wage gap is even greater for women of color. It is unconscionable that 52 years after President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, which established the principle of equal pay for equal work for women in the workforce, we still have such great gender-based pay disparities. This is harmful to our families and America's global competitiveness.

That is why I strongly support the Paycheck Fairness Act, legislation which would strengthen the 1963 Equal Pay Act and provide effective remedies to women who are not being paid equal wages for doing equal work. It is time for Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. I am also proud to support the Equal Pay Resolution, which recognizes the significance of Equal Pay Day to illustrate the disparity between wages paid to men and women, and its impact on women, families, and the nation.

Equal pay is not simply a women's issue—it is an economic issue. When women are paid fairly, families and businesses prosper. When families and businesses prosper, America prospers.

HONORING MAYOR CLINT COBBINS

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 14, 2015*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Mayor Clint Cobbins.

The Honorable Mayor Clint Cobbins is the first African-American mayor of Lexington, Mississippi, the county seat for Holmes County.

A Holmes County native, Mayor Cobbins is the seventh of eight children born to Mr. Lee Henry Cobbins and Mrs. Willie Lee Cobbins. Mayor Cobbins grew up in the Ebenezer Community. He is a 1974 graduate of the former Lexington Attendance Center (LAC). He also attended Holmes Community College in Goodman, Mississippi, where he received training as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

In 1983, he became a certified firefighter from the Mississippi State Fire Academy. In 1987, he completed his Law Enforcement Training through the Law Enforcement Academy in Pearl, Mississippi. He served in Law Enforcement for twenty-four and a half years. He retired as Police Chief of Tchula, Mississippi. Mr. Cobbins also held a dual career as an Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Canton, Mississippi where he served for twenty-eight and a half years. In 2004, he became an ordained Elder with the Guiding Light Church of God in Christ, Lexington, Mississippi.

Since becoming Lexington's first African-American Mayor in 2012, he has been instrumental in the renovation facelift of the downtown Lexington area—completing the sidewalk project. He worked with the North Central Planning Board to restart the feeding program for senior citizens, which serves over 50 hot meals per day at the Multi-purpose Building. He also continued the Mayor's Health Council program for senior citizens.

During the summer of 2014, Mayor Cobbins held, in collaboration with Madison County Sheriff's Explorers Program, a Fire and Police Academy Safety camp for Holmes County youth ages 6 to 14, in which 102 graduated from the camp. He plans to do another camp during the summer of 2015. "We have to keep our young people busy doing something constructive during the summer months. It will help them to stay out of trouble," the Mayor said.

Also during 2014, he and the Aldermen of the City of Lexington, along with the Board of Supervisors of Leflore County collaborated with the Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) in securing a recent \$495,000.00 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Dallas and BankPlus of Mississippi to do housing repairs in the City of Lexington and in Greenwood.

Mayor Cobbins and the City Board of Aldermen have also voted to work toward making Lexington a Smoke-Free City. That work is currently in progress.

Mayor Cobbins and his wife are also local business owners of Kay's Sugar Shack—a short order food business.

Mayor Cobbins is married to Karen J. Cobbins, a native of Pickets, Mississippi, and they are the parents of three adult children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mayor Clint Cobbins for his outstanding services in his community.