

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support and optimism for the U.N. Climate Change Conference, or COP 21, which will be held in Paris next month.

In advance of the negotiations, 146 parties submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, laying out the actions they intend to take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These pledges cover 86 percent of global emissions.

We have seen major commitments from the United States, the European Union, China, and other major developing nations. We have also seen incredible support from the private sector.

Many companies, including dozens of Fortune 500 companies, have made commitments to the American Business Act on Climate Pledge. Many businesses recognize that acting on climate change is not only the morally right thing to do, but the economically right thing to do, also.

An agreement in Paris would be an incredible first step that could be built upon with even more ambitious goals in the coming years because the bottom line in climate change is too big to tackle alone.

We need global cooperation from governments and businesses, and the United States must be a leader, demanding bold action to take on the very real threats we face.

An agreement in Paris is good for our national security, our economy, and our environment. I wish good luck to our negotiating team.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MASON HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Mason High School marching band, which was selected to participate in the Rose Bowl parade on New Year's Day. Only 20 high school bands are selected from across the country each year to participate in this highly prestigious event.

The Mason High School band has won four consecutive titles as the top high school band in all of Ohio. They also finished fifth in the national competition, becoming only the second band from southwest Ohio to ever play in the Rose Bowl parade.

I know that the students in the band have put in a lot of hard work for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I have no doubt that they will perform magnificently.

The Rose Bowl parade is televised around the world in 115 countries. So this is a great opportunity to show the world the talented students from southwest Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish the students, the parents, the teachers, and all of Mason High School the best as they travel and perform and make our community proud. Go, Comets.

CELEBRATING DIWALI

(Mr. BERA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, next week is Diwali. The annual festival of lights is celebrated by more than 2 million Indian Americans and more than 1 billion people worldwide.

Tomorrow more than a thousand Indian Americans will descend on Capitol Hill to celebrate Diwali. It is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the South Asian community, accomplishments in business, technology, health care, and academics.

All across this Nation, in communities small and large, you will see those small-business owners, those academics, those doctors. It is a chance to give back to a country that has provided so much opportunity to immigrants over the generations, including the Indian American community.

For a community that has benefited so much, it is great to see them participating in the political process, celebrating those accomplishments, and giving back to a country that means so much to us.

Mr. Speaker, let's celebrate. Let's celebrate who we are as Americans. Let's celebrate a dynasty of immigrants, one successive generation after another, moving this country forward.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO EDINA GIRLS TENNIS

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, if it is fall, it means it is time for another Edina High School girls tennis State title. For the 19th year in a row, the Hornets won the Minnesota State championship. This year concluded with a very hard-fought victory over Prior Lake.

Despite Edina's previous success, this year's title was never a sure thing, as the team needed to rebound from an early season loss. Led by strong performances in singles by Sophia Reddy and in doubles by Katie Engelking and Nicole Copeland, the Hornets came out with a 5-2 victory.

Mr. Speaker, it is exciting to see the commitment from these athletes as they compete at a high level year in and year out while still excelling in school and setting aside time for family and other commitments. The parents, family members, friends, fans, and coaches are all very proud of what they have accomplished.

Congratulations, again, to the Edina High School girls tennis team for winning the State championship.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT E. STARR

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a beloved Fort Worth educator, veteran, and civil rights activist, Mr. Robert E. Starr.

Mr. Starr attended I.M. Terrell High School and was the first in his family to attend college. While he was in college, he was drafted into the military and served as a medic during World War II, a time when the Army was still segregated. There were two Armies: one Black and one White. Mr. Starr saw some things that he shared with us that I will never forget.

After he completed his education at Texas College in Tyler, he got his master's degree at Texas Southern University. He worked in the Fort Worth schools. He became known as a civil rights activist that was passionate about issues in the community. Mr. Starr was also employed at the FAA as a diversity manager, worked for the City of Fort Worth as an affirmative action manager, and worked as an investigator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Mr. Starr was also dedicated to the NAACP.

Mr. Starr was a proud member of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church on the north side of Fort Worth. He was also a very proud resident of the north side of Fort Worth.

Mr. Starr was preceded in death by his wife and daughter. He and his wife had a daughter that was severely disabled, and they were 100 percent dedicated to her. She died a few years ago.

Mr. Starr will be sorely missed in the community. He was at every event and did so much for everyone. He was literally a friend to everybody that he ever met.

HONORING WOODY WOODSIDE

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Woody Woodside for his outstanding service with the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce.

Over the last 30 years as president of the chamber of commerce, Woody has dedicated his life to the success of Brunswick and the Golden Isles, making countless trips to Washington, D.C., for the benefit of southeast Georgia. But his service and leadership go far beyond his chamber presidency.

Woody graduated from The Citadel in 1970 and is a retired officer with 23 years of service to the Georgia National Guard. In addition, he served as a congressional staff member for 14 years to two of my predecessors, Congressman "Bo" Ginn and Congressman Lindsay Thomas.

Woody has devoted his life to serving his country and his community. I am very lucky to call him a constituent, but I am luckier to call him a friend.

I would like to thank Woody for his service to the Golden Isles, the First Congressional District of Georgia, the great State of Georgia, and our country.

VETERANS DAY AND MERCHANT MARINERS

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, next week, Americans will celebrate Veterans Day and honor the sacrifices of the men and women who have served this Nation, but one group of veterans has gone unrecognized far too long.

In World War II, more than 200,000 merchant mariners braved troubled seas to deliver supplies to the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific. They faced enemy attack and suffered a casualty rate higher than any other uniformed service.

Unfortunately, the World War II Merchant Marine veterans were never eligible for benefits under the GI Bill and were long excluded even from Veterans Day celebrations. Many of these merchant mariners are now well into their eighties and nineties and have yet to receive the honor and appreciation they deserve.

As Veterans Day approaches, I am calling once again on my colleagues to pass H.R. 563, legislation that will provide the fewer than 5,000 surviving World War II Merchant Marine veterans with a one-time \$25,000 payment as a token of this Nation's appreciation.

When my colleagues are home in their districts celebrating Veterans Day, I hope that what I have said today will prick their conscience. Despite their sacrifice, despite their patriotism, one group of veterans has not been celebrated. Our merchant mariners deserve so much more. It is time to pass H.R. 563.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRED THOMPSON

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today, I stand to remember a much-loved Tennessean.

Though Fred Thompson's roots were in Tennessee, his service spanned far past the borders of our State and into the lives and homes of all Americans. To my family and to many in middle Tennessee, Fred Thompson was a neighbor, a friend, and a trusted political voice.

His passing brings great sadness to all, especially those in his hometown of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, a town he never forgot, a town and her people that he credited with teaching him life lessons and giving him the perspective he carried with him throughout life. Those small-town Tennessee lessons helped mold him into the incredible man that he was, with a legacy that will never be forgotten. I appreciate all he did on behalf of our State, our Nation, and the cause of freedom.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Jeri, and all the Thompson family. He will be missed.

VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I joined Lackawanna Mayor Geoff Szymanski, a United States Navy veteran, to recognize Veterans Small Business Week and promote startup workshops for veterans, hosted by the Small Business Administration.

Every year, more than 200,000 servicemembers transition to the civilian workforce, and our Nation must make that transition as smooth as possible, not only out of gratitude, but because our veterans are some of the most industrious and determined citizens, which gives them the ability to make an outsized contribution to our economy.

That is why I support Helmets to Hardhats, which connects veterans with apprenticeships in the building and construction trades; and that is why Congress must remove the expiration dates for GI Bill education benefits so that veterans can receive the career training they earned and deserve.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. GUINTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and millions of Americans joined our fight against a disease that strikes one out of every eight women in our country.

This issue is personal to me and the thousands of Granite Staters who have family and friends suffering from breast cancer, or who suffer from it themselves. My mother is a breast cancer survivor. Her courageous battle is my inspiration in Congress.

I joined more than 180 Members to cosponsor legislation that would encourage the government and private sector to work together to find a cure. Thanks to the hard work of Nancy Ryan and the New Hampshire Breast Cancer Coalition, which recently marked its 20th anniversary, that cure is even closer today.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women in the United States. Every October, we honor and remember those who have died and those who are living with breast cancer. We acknowledge the hard work of the medical professionals and caregivers, and we recommit ourselves to finding a solution that will save lives.

APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in recognition of the first National Apprenticeship Week. As always, it is an honor to join my good friend and colleague, Representative G.T. THOMPSON from Pennsylvania, who will be speaking next. I want to thank him for his bipartisan leadership on career and technical education issues. As co-chairs of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, G.T. and I are committed to expanding apprenticeships so that every American has the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen career.

While apprenticeships have been slow to grow in the United States, Germany and Switzerland have long been recognized as global leaders in this field. Last month, I convened a CTE Caucus field hearing in Rhode Island, bringing experts from German industry and education to help spread the best practices of a robust apprenticeship model.

I look forward to working with my colleague from Pennsylvania and all of my colleagues in the House to expand these options for all students, not just in my home State, but across the entire country.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, Mr. LANGEVIN from Rhode Island, for his leadership and his remarks. I also rise in recognition of National Apprenticeship Week, which runs through this Saturday.

Training and support for those looking to enter vocational fields is something that is very important to me, as co-chairman of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus. It is essential that we give our workers the training and resources that they need to secure family-supporting jobs.

Apprenticeships are a vital part of this effort to help workers prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, along with the in-demand positions that are currently going unfilled. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the industries which rely on apprenticeship training are in demand, including a huge need for certified electricians, construction workers, and those in the health technology fields. More than 430,000 Americans are currently participating in an apprenticeship program, gaining the knowledge to rise to the demands of today's workforce.

Mr. Speaker, these programs give workers hands-on experience and lead to much higher lifetime earnings for those that participate.

VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT

(Mr. CLYBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1