

other Telemedicine and Distance Learning projects throughout the Bell Atlantic territory.

In 1995, Andy was promoted to Director of Federal Relations for Bell Atlantic and continued to work in Government Affairs after Bell Atlantic merged with NYNEX to become part of the new Bell Atlantic. A later merger with GTE created Verizon in 2000, and later mergers with MCI and the purchase of Vodafone's interest in VerizonWireless created the current Verizon where Andy is finishing his distinguished career.

He has also served as Chairman and in a leadership capacity with Signal Credit Union for many years. Andy has continued to focus on health care and telemedicine policy but also worked on labor, immigration, environment, and other issues. He is well known and admired for his expertise, effectiveness, friendliness, and generosity as well as his ability to forge effective coalitions with diverse memberships. Additionally, he is a proud member of "Red Sox Nation" and a long-time fan of the New England Patriots.

Andy is a long-time resident of Maryland and resides in Adamstown with his wife, Linda. Together they have two adult children, Cory and Elise. In retirement, Andy and Linda are looking forward to spending time at their homes in Massachusetts and Maryland.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH  
BIRTHDAY OF MS. VIRGINIA VEAL

**HON. ANDER CRENSHAW**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the 100th Birthday of Ms. Virginia Inez Bates Veal on December 17, 2015. Born on December 17, 1915, Ms. Veal has called Jacksonville, Florida home since her family moved from Bartow, Florida in 1918 when she was just three years old.

Virginia's life reads right out of the pages of a Jacksonville history book. As a young girl, she survived the Spanish Flu Epidemic that ran rampant through Florida in 1918. Her family endured the difficulties of the Great Depression in the late 1920's. And in 1934 Virginia graduated from Jacksonville's second oldest high school, and also my alma mater, Robert E. Lee High School.

After graduation, Virginia began working at Furchgott's, a local department store, in the Ladies Fine Wear section. After a 20 year career she retired as the Department Manager. During this time, Virginia raised two sons, Lamar Jr. and Lewis, in Jacksonville's well known preservation area of Murray Hill. Her two sons, also graduates of Robert E. Lee High School, went on to college and graduated from the University of Florida.

Virginia was married for almost 58 years to Mr. Prentice Veal. Mr. Veal managed and owned several dry cleaning plants around Jacksonville and Orange Park, Florida. Virginia today still enjoys cooking, gardening, visiting with family and friends, and is very active in her ladies' circle and Sunday school class at Riverside Park United Methodist Church.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in wishing Jacksonville native, Ms. Virginia Veal, a very special happy 100th birthday.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JORDAN  
SMITH

**HON. HAROLD ROGERS**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Harlan County's own Jordan Smith for winning Season 9 of The Voice, NBC's nationwide vocal competition.

Jordan's superior talent impressed all four superstar judges during the blind auditions, igniting a competition for Jordan's team choice. From the moment the world heard Jordan's vocal debut, his powerful gift was undeniable. However, it was in the conversations following his performance that Jordan shared insight to his outstanding character, his determination and humility, as well as his faith in God. His courage and boldness has inspired people across the country, and especially in the hills of Eastern Kentucky. Coach Adam Levine said it best, noting Jordan as "the most important person that's ever been on this show."

Jordan has received applause and the utmost praise from some of the most talented, award-winning artists across the nation, affirming that his vocal gymnastics have impressed the best of the best artists. Coach Pharrell Williams even expressed to Jordan, "God has signed your voice." Jordan quickly became more than a singer in a televised competition, but arose as a leader and inspiration during a critical time in our nation. The celebration of Jordan's personal victory comes during a time when hope is desperately needed in his hometown and across the country. With the looming threat of terrorism at an all-time high and as Jordan's hometown region suffers from devastating job losses in the coal industry, he chose encouraging songs of hope and faith to transcend shared feelings of despair and fear. Additionally, Jordan's performances shined a spotlight on the compassionate and talented people of Harlan County, evoking much-needed positive news stories about our region.

It is his courage of conviction that makes Jordan so much more than a vocalist on stage. He is a leader of hope and faith for our nation and the people of Eastern Kentucky are deeply proud of his accomplishments thus far.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Jordan Smith on his monumental win on The Voice. I look forward to following the career of another talented artist from Eastern Kentucky.

TRIBUTE TO JIM AND JOLENE  
NELSON

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Jim and Jolene Nelson of Anita, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary. They were married on November 20, 1960, at the Lutheran Church in Greenfield, Iowa.

Jim and Jolene's lifelong commitment to each other, their daughter, Janet, and their

granddaughter, Emily, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Nelsons that make me proud to represent our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 55th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

FIRST RESPONDERS PASSPORT  
ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 16, 2015*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3750, the "First Responders Passport Act of 2015."

I thank Representative DARRELL ISSA and the House Foreign Affairs Committee Leadership, Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for shepherding this legislation along.

This bill amends the Passport Act of June 4, 1920 to waive passport fees for an individual who has contracted with the U.S. government, including a volunteer, to aid a foreign country suffering from a qualifying natural disaster.

As the African proverb goes, "in moments of crisis, the wise build bridges—" this is what our first responders do: they build bridges for those caught in natural disasters.

In today's world fraught with natural disasters from Storm Desert that our friends in the U.K. are facing to cyclones, hurricanes and tornadoes across the globe, more than ever, it is very important that we build bridges by equipping our first responders dedicated to aiding countries across the globe suffering from natural disasters.

According to scientists, the first half of this decade featured deadly climate-related disasters, among them the great floods in Thailand in 2011, Hurricane Sandy in the United States in 2012, and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013.

Moreover, the year 2014 was the earth's warmest in 134 years of recorded history, and 2015 could well turn out to be even hotter.

According to some scientists, it is difficult to not draw a nexus between climate change and some of the natural disasters we have suffered on planet earth in this decade alone.

In the end, climate related and natural disasters have cost the world a lot in lives as well as economically.

In fact, according to the World Meteorological Organization, 1,300 climate-related natural disasters have been recorded in Africa between 1970 to 2012.

In this time frame, these natural disasters in Africa have caused the loss of 700,000 lives and caused economic damage worth U.S. \$26 billion.

Experts inform us that in 2012 there were 99 natural disasters in Africa—twice the long-term average.

The passage of H.R. 3750 is very timely, especially in light of recent talks in Le Bourget, France at the Conference of Parties (COP 21), with the objective of achieving a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world.