

increases. The question is—will this leverage be used to help the people of Vietnam or their Communist rulers?

I have been to Vietnam. I have met with its rights advocates and young activists for decades now. The younger generation in Vietnam—66 percent of Vietnam is under the age of 40—looks to the U.S. as a land of opportunity and freedom.

This generation wants the same liberties enjoyed by their relatives in California, Texas, Virginia, Louisiana and so many other places where former Vietnamese refugees have flourished.

They want to speak freely, blog freely, worship freely, and be free to choose and change their leaders.

Failing to press for concrete human rights improvements underestimates U.S. leverage and will disappoint the young generation in Vietnam who are that country's dynamic future.

The President will face pressure from his advisors and the business community to look at Vietnam through the lens of trade deals and the containment of China. Hopefully, he will be able to see the situation more clearly than past Administrations.

I know there is great interest in the Pentagon about a partnership with Vietnam to oppose China's aggressive South China Sea policy. The U.S. has an interest in free and open sea lanes.

But no government that represses its own people or restricts fundamental freedoms can be a trusted ally of the United States. No government that censors the Internet, tortures and jails dissidents, and crushes civil society should be given generous trade or security benefits without conditions.

Robust championing of individual rights will meet with some success—if recent history is our guide.

The Vietnamese government has responded to concerns expressed by the last two Administrations when they linked human rights improvements to better U.S.-Vietnam relations.

Whether to gain entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), the TransPacific Partnership (TPP) or to address U.S. concerns over religious freedom abuses, the Vietnamese government took steps toward reform when pressed by past American Presidents.

It is when the U.S. loses interest in human rights that conditions regress—as it has in the past year.

The business of the Communist Party is staying in power and repressing those they believe will challenge their power. They will not embrace human rights improvements or the rule of law unless it is a firm condition of better relations with the U.S.

Putting human rights and the rule of law at the center of bilateral relations is the goal of H.R. 5621—the Vietnam Human Rights Act—bipartisan legislation that was introduced last month.

The bill emphasizes the connection between human rights improvements and U.S. interests and states that U.S. policy should prioritize the freedom of religion, freedom of the press, Internet Freedom, independent labor unions, the protection of women and girls from trafficking, and advances in the rule of law as critical components of both U.S.-Vietnam relations and any U.S.-led effort to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Similar bills passed three times in the House with overwhelming margins, only to stall in the Senate.

U.S. policy must send the unmistakable message to the Government of Vietnam that human rights improvements are fundamental to better relations, critically linked to our mutual economic and security interests, and will not be ignored or bargained away.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MCCONKEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate John McConkey of CAM High School for winning the Class 2A, 285 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament. John finished the season with a record of 57–1.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs, producing college and Olympic champions for years. John contributes his success to years of hard work and commitment and for the support from his parents, family, coaches and fellow teammates.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by John demonstrates the rewards of dedication and perseverance. It is an honor representing John and his family in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating John on competing in this rigorous competition and in wishing him nothing but continued success in his education and in his future endeavors.

REFORMING OUR DISASTER RESPONSE SYSTEM

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Harvey hammered Houston last August, bringing with it a deluge of rain. In the nine months since then, Houston has begun to recover. Downtown Houston is full of students and workers of all ages, strolling the streets during their lunch break. However, there is still lots to be done. Only minutes north of downtown Houston, Minute Maid Park, and the Toyota Center is Kashmere Gardens, a neighborhood that 10,000 Houstonians have called home. Each street in this neighborhood has houses that are no longer habitable, with destroyed doors and gutted interiors.

While the rest of Houston is flourishing, Kashmere Gardens is floundering. This is not due to the actions of any one agency, but rather the convoluted and bureaucratic disaster-response system that almost everyone agrees is failing to provide the necessary support in the wake of these disasters. Federal recovery funding currently comes from 17 different federal agencies, including HUD and DHS, which oversees FEMA. We must streamline the recovery process for the sake of those who are impacted by disasters. There are still Houstonians, including those in Kashmere Gardens, who are living in transitional housing because they are unable to navigate the government's cumbersome dis-

aster recovery efforts. When someone's home is destroyed in a hurricane, wildfire, or volcanic explosion, they should not have to spend months trying to discern their eligibility for federal disaster relief. They should be able to focus on rebuilding their home and their life.

Another hurricane season is just beginning, and it is expected to again be a season with above-average activity. We must learn from past disasters to better respond to disasters that are still to come.

And that's just the way it is.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL MONUMENT AT WASHINGTON CROSSING NATIONAL CEMETERY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2018

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Washington Crossing National Cemetery as the first national veterans' cemetery to accept from the Hershel 'Woody' Williams Medal of Honor Foundation the gift of a beautiful Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, which will be dedicated on Saturday June 9, 2018. Approximately 35 similar monuments have been dedicated across the country, but this one is the very first in a national veterans' cemetery.

The Hershel 'Woody' Williams Foundation is a nonprofit organization that seeks to erect monuments for Gold Star families throughout the United States, and provides scholarships to children of fallen heroes.

At the request of John C. Heenan, Project Chairman, I would like to honor the important and enthusiastic help provided by the Director of Washington Crossing National Cemetery, Gregory J. Whitney, and his team along with the official support group, The Guardians of the Washington Crossing National Cemetery, to bring this most noble project to fruition.

Since opening in January 2010, more than 11,000 of our nation's veterans have made this cemetery their final resting place. The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument is a tribute to Gold Star Families—to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and their loved ones who continue to honor their memory.

We must never forget our fallen service members, who paid the ultimate sacrifice to uphold our liberties and cherished way of life. For the families of those departed, may this monument serve as a small token of our humble gratitude for the heroism of their loved ones.

IN RECOGNITION OF THEOLA JONES FOR BEING NAMED A WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT BY THE KAPPA FOUNDATION

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2018

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Theola Jones for being named a