

Madam Speaker, Joe has been an integral part of my staff and an invaluable help to the people of the Sixth District of Tennessee. I wish him, his wife, Lori, and their daughter, Kyla, all the best in the future.

REMARKS TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, it has been a true privilege for Betty Ann and me to represent Tennessee's 8th district in this chamber for the past 22 years, and we will always be grateful to the people of west and middle Tennessee who have given us the chance to do so. We now look forward to the transition from our role in Congress to that of private citizens, often said to be the highest office in our country.

Following the Constitutional Convention, Madam Speaker, a citizen asked Benjamin Franklin what that important body had created, and he replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." At the heart of this governmental model, public officials represent first and foremost the people who elect them.

I worry that our government is in danger of becoming more of a parliamentary system, where elected officials represent first and foremost their political parties. That is not what our founding fathers intended when they established this great nation, and it is not the right approach for our nation going forward.

The American people, by and large, do not reside in the extreme left wing or in the extreme right wing. They are solution-minded citizens who want their elected representatives to work together to address the problems that face us as Americans, not as Democrats or Republicans.

Unfortunately, the current political system, especially following decades of partisan gerrymandering with more to come in the year ahead, does little to incentivize such cooperation. Consequently, the political center in our representative government has been decimated, resulting in a great disservice to the American people.

Many of us certainly understand and share the angst the American people feel in a time of economic uncertainty, two wars, a seemingly insurmountable federal debt and ongoing concerns over homeland security.

These are complex problems that cannot be solved with bumper-sticker solutions, over-simplified soundbites and combative rhetoric. They require cooperation among thoughtful individuals who will put their district and country first.

To address these problems and restore the faith in our republic, those inside and outside government must be willing to extend to one who disagrees the same purity of motive and intellectual honesty one claims for oneself.

That is necessary, Madam Speaker, if we are to keep our republic.

HONORING ABRAHAM "ABE"
THOMPSON

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Abraham "Abe" Thompson, who passed away on Wednesday, December 15, 2010, at the age of 94.

Abe served honorably during World War II as an officer of the United States Army Air Force in the 747th Squadron of the 456th Heavy Bombardment Group, stationed in Stornara, Italy. Abe flew 49 missions before being shot down on his 50th over Germany. The pilot managed to glide the plane into Switzerland, where the crew parachuted and were subsequently interned. Abe escaped into France after 73 days and made his way to American forces in Lyon.

After he was discharged, Abe raised his family in Yonkers, NY. He then moved to Huntington in the 1970s, after which he earned his law degree at the age of 73. He was an active member of the community, including serving as president of the local AARP chapter as well as a founding member and serving as Commander of the Nassau/Suffolk Long Island Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Abe was the loving husband of the late Bertha Gordon Thompson; devoted companion of Rita DeLuise and her family; adored father of Carole and Steven Roberts, Robert and Rosalie Thompson, and the late Phyllis Gordon; the cherished grandfather of Jennifer and Michael, Adam, Alison and Clark, and Jill and Jim; and the loving great-grandfather of Ned and Grace.

I am so proud that Abe was a member of the 2nd District of New York and I know that he will be missed by the many people whose lives he impacted.

FAREWELL REMARKS

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, in just a few short weeks, my 8th term as Representative for the Fourth Congressional District of Kansas will come to an end, and I want to thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to serve them these past 16 years. It has been a profound honor to represent Kansas in our Nation's Capital and to be a Member of this Institution.

Much has changed since I first walked onto the House floor in January 1995 following the historic Republican Revolution of 1994. We have witnessed the impeachment of a U.S. president, four years of balanced budgets, the end and beginning of a new millennium, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, an ongoing global war against terror, and the collapse of established financial and business institutions world-wide.

Other things have changed very little. We are still fighting against run-away federal deficit spending. The false notion that new gov-

ernment programs will solve our greatest problems continues to plague Washington despite attempts at cutting waste.

Thanks to the Tea Party movement, a new wave of fiscally conservative Representatives will take office in January, and I am hopeful we will see renewed progress in putting Washington on a diet.

One of the privileges of serving Kansas has been to achieve real results for our communities. During my Congressional tenure, we were successful in repealing the Wright amendment to help lower air fares, return millions of tax dollars back to Kansas to help build dozens of important infrastructure projects, protect the rights of the unborn through the 1998 Tiahrt amendment, secure over \$90 million in funding for the National Institute for Aviation Research at Wichita State University and place a statue of General Dwight D. Eisenhower in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will remain permanently.

Working with Sen. BROWNBACK and Sen. ROBERTS, we successfully fought back attempts to procure a European refueling tanker and have made the case for purchasing an American tanker made by an American company with American workers. It is my continued hope that the Air Force will make the right decision and select the KC-767 that will employ thousands of skilled engineers and workers in Kansas.

Madam Speaker, as I reflect on my service in the House, I want to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Vicki, and my children who have supported me and walked with me on this 16-year journey. Serving in Congress is often most difficult on a member's family. We purposefully chose to serve these 16 years together. My wife and children were part of every term. I was blessed to have them with me to roam the marble halls of Congress, meet America's leaders, and get to know the citizens we served. Watching history unfold with my family by my side gave me many memories I will forever cherish.

Throughout my time as a Member of Congress, I have remembered my family is a gift from God and will always be my greatest accomplishment. Their work on numerous projects throughout Kansas has made our state and country a better place to live, and their love and encouragement continue to inspire me. I am so glad to be finishing this chapter of my life with Vicki, Jessica and John by my side, and we would give anything if Luke were here, too.

Many of the difficult tasks here in Congress could not be done without the hard work of staff. I have been blessed with committed staffers who stood with me as I fought for our Kansas values and a limited government.

My staff, past and present, worked tirelessly, not only for me, but for the people of Kansas and for our country.

Robert Noland has been with me since day one. He has been a loyal and faithful friend and has shown tremendous wisdom in managing my district office. I will never forget his years of hard work and dedication to me and to our state.

Jeff Kahrs has been with me since my first term in office, and I am grateful for his friendship, leadership and counsel over the years. His perception and vision have helped me focus on what's important.