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businesses under ObamaCare. So the idea that somehow small businesses are going to be hurt because of ObamaCare, the opposite is true. Right now this is helping small businesses with a tax cut.

Here are a couple of more examples. Jerry M., a constituent, said:

My 24-year-old daughter does not make enough money to pay for individual health care. She became very ill with a throat abscess and almost died. If it weren't for ObamaCare, she would not be covered under my husband's insurance plan then. If we had not been able to get her into an excellent hospital that saved her, she might have died.

That's no longer true. You don't have to worry about that. You can stop worrying about going bankrupt over health care costs.

Here's from a senior:

My drugs are over $4,000 a year or more, and I hit the doughnut hole—meaning a gap in coverage and the senior has to pay on her own—by July or August. But because of ObamaCare paying 50 percent, it's very helpful to me. It probably saves me $1,200 or more a year.

She's an example of someone who is saving money right now because of ObamaCare. Take another look. I think it's really going to alleviate your worry about health care costs for your family.

SUPPORT THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. RICHARDSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the latest Republican attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to block meaningful health care reform. The Affordable Care Act has been upheld by the highest court, the United States Supreme Court, who found that this legislation was constitutional.

I rise today to stress my support of the Affordable Care Act and my opposition to the legislation brought before us today.

This legislation addresses the Affordable Health Care Act, millions of uninsured Americans, and it strengthens the Medicare system. It relieves all Americans of the growing financial burden and medical costs of insurance that many find tough to bear.

Let me talk a little bit about my district in California. In the 37th Congressional District, the benefits of this bill are already undisputable. There are now 23,000 children and 90,000 adults who have health care insurance that covers preventive services with no copays, co-insurance, or deductible. There will be 501 small businesses that will receive tax credits that will help them maintain or expand their health care coverage for their employees. Health care providers in my district have received $3.4 million in affordable care grants since 2010 to support community health centers, to develop innovative and cost-saving health care delivery systems, and to train new health care professionals. These statistics are not unique to my district. There are similar success stories emerging all over the country.

Let me speak a little bit about some of those general things that are happening. If you're a senior, based upon the Affordable Care Act now, you are receiving a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs when you are in Medicare and you experience the doughnut hole coverage gap. You have free key preventive services such as mammograms, colonoscopies, and a free annual well-visit with your physician. If you're a woman, you now have free coverage of lifesaving preventive services such as mammograms. Beginning in August, free coverage will also include additional comprehensive women-preventive services, including breast feeding support, contraception, and domestic violence screening.

If you're a parent and you have a child who is under the age of 19, they can't be denied coverage by an insurance company because of a preexisting condition. If you're an adult, you can now join or stay on your parents' health plan until you're 26 years old. Those are for our young adults. If you're a small business owner, you will be one of the millions who will be eligible as a small business owner to receive tax credits if you choose to offer coverage to your employees.

Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act was a long-overdue bill that corrects deep injustices and access to health care. The Affordable Care Act should be an act that is respected and upheld by this House. It has gone through the proper channels of legislation and now has been validated by the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, all Americans—young, old, rich, and poor—have an inalienable right to health care and to be able to prosper. To be able to prosper, you need to be healthy.

I ask my colleagues to support the Affordable Care Act and to join me in fierce opposition to repealing the advances in health care that we already won. When we look forward, we must focus on implementing the affordable health care bill and focus on getting Americans back to work.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 29 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings during the former Members program be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the proceedings have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2012 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Barbara Kennelly, vice president of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8:12 a.m.

PRAYER

Dr. Alan Kieran, Office of the Senate Chaplain, offered the following prayer:

Lord God Almighty, author of life and creator of the universe, we come today seeking Your divine wisdom, peace, and protection.

In these complex times, inspire our Nation's leaders to pray with the certainty that You hear them and respond to their petitions. Anoint our leaders with Your spirit and grant them Your favor.

Father, we also know that Your divine protection is everlasting. We are not naive, though, in thinking that all will always be well. But in tough times, we are assured that You, King of Heaven's armies, will be watching over us and guiding us.

Finally, Lord, be with those in harm's way and their families. I pray in Your mighty name, Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Hon. Barbara Kennelly led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Ms. KENNELLY. The Chair now calls on the Honorable Connie Morella, president of the association, and a wonderful president, to take the chair.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you. Thank you, Barbara.

It's always a very distinct privilege to be back in this revered Chamber, and we appreciate the opportunity today to have the 42nd annual report of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress.

I'm going to be joined by a number of our colleagues in reporting on the activities and the projects of our organization.

And so first of all, I'd like to ask the Clerk to call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll of the former Members of Congress, as follows:

Mr. Alexander of Arkansas
Mr. Blanchard of Michigan
Mr. Bonker of Washington
Mr. Buechner of Missouri
Ms. Byron of Maryland
Mr. Carr of Michigan
Mr. Clement of Tennessee
Mr. Coyne of Pennsylvania
Mr. Davis of Virginia

Mr. DioGuardi of New York
Mr. Garcia of New York
Mr. Green of Wisconsin
Mr. Glickman of Kansas
Mr. Hertel of Michigan
Mr. Hochbrueckner of New York
Mr. Kennedy of Minnesota
Ms. Kennelly of Connecticut
Mr. Kolbe of Arizona
Mr. Konnyu of California
Mr. Kramer of Colorado
Mr. Lancaster of North Carolina
Mr. LaRocco of Idaho
Mr. McHugh of New York
Mr. McMillen of Maryland
Mr. Michel of Illinois
Mr. McNulty of New York
Ms. Morella of Maryland
Mr. Pressler of South Dakota
Mr. Sarasin of Connecticut
Mr. Skelton of Missouri
Mr. Symington of Missouri
Mr. Walsh of New York
Mr. Zeliff of New York

Ms. MORELLA. Fellow association members, I'm very pleased again to welcome you to our 42nd annual meeting. And I'd like to tell you something about the association.

It is bipartisan, as you know. It was chartered by Congress in 1983. The purpose of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress is to promote public service and strengthen democracy, both abroad and in the United States.

About 600 former Senators and Representatives belong to the association. Republicans, Democrats, and Independents are united in this organization in their desire to teach about Congress and the importance of representative democracy.

We're proud to have been chartered by Congress, and we receive no funding from Congress. All the activities which we're about to describe are financed via membership dues, program-specific grants, and sponsors, or via our fundraising dinner. Our finances are sound, our projects are fully funded, and our 2011 audit by an outside accountant came back with a clean bill of financial health.

It's been a very successful, active, and rewarding year. We have continued our work serving as a liaison between the current Congress and legislatures overseas. We have created partnerships with highly respected institutions in the area of democracy building and election monitoring.

We have developed new projects, we're expanding others, and we again have sent dozens of bipartisan teams of former Members of Congress to teach about public service and representative democracy at universities and high schools, both in the United States as well as abroad.

When this organization was created over 40 years ago, the former Members who founded our association envisioned the organization taking the lead in teaching about Congress and encouraging public service. They were hoping that former Members could inspire the next generation of America's leaders. And over the years, we have created a number of programs, most importantly, the Congress to Campus program, to do just that.

We continue to work with our great partner, the Stennis Center for Public Service. We thank them for their invaluable assistance in administering the Congress to Campus program.

It now gives me great pleasure to yield to a former president of our association, a good friend, Matt McHugh of New York, who, along with Jack Buechner, another former president from Missouri, cochairs this great program. Thank you, Matt.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Connie, and congratulations to you on assuming the leadership of the association. We know you will do a wonderful job.

As you all know, the Congress to Campus program is the association's flagship domestic program and the one that most engages Members from all across the country of the association. Congress to Campus sends, as Connie said, bipartisan teams of former Members to colleges, universities, and high schools across the country and around the world. We educate the next generation of leaders about the value of public service. Students benefit from the personal interaction with our association members, whose knowledge, experience, and accessibility are unique teaching tools.

During each visit, our bipartisan teams lead classes, meet one-on-one with students and faculty, speak to campus media, participate in campus and community forums, and interact with local citizens. Institutions are encouraged to market the visit to the entire campus community and not just to those students majoring in political science, history, or government. Over the course of 2½ days, hundreds of students are exposed to the former Members' message of public service and civility.

The Congress to Campus program reached an exciting new audience this June at the 2012 American Democracy Project annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Former Members Dan Miller of Florida and Jerry Patterson of California, as well as our staff member, Liz Ardagna, traveled to Texas to promote the program to nearly 500 university students, administrators, and professors who are actively engaged in civic education.

During the conference, our former Members hosted a town hall meeting, a breakout session on the Congress to Campus program, and passed out brochures and spoke with teachers at the Campus & Friends tabling fair. Our people not only got the word out about our program, but also energized and reinvigorated hundreds of teachers who instruct our Nation's youth about the importance of civic engagement.

The program also made a number of international visits this academic year, including two visits to the United Kingdom and one to Turkey. Domestically, the Congress to Campus program more than doubled its visits from the fall of 2011 to the spring of 2012 and already has 13 visits booked for the fall of 2012.

The 2011–2012 academic year included visits to the United States Naval Academy, Dartmouth College, and the Coast Community College System in California. This fall we will be visiting Boston University, Penn State, and the McGovern Center for Public Service at the University of South Dakota, among others.

More than 25 former Members participated this academic year, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated and donated your time and energy. I also want to make a special note of thanking Jack Buechner, who cochairs this program with me and who has done a magnificent job.

I also want to encourage those who have not yet had the opportunity to do so and to encourage a friend from across the aisle to join you. It is an excellent opportunity to continue your public service after Congress. Our staff has the fall 2012 Congress to Campus schedule here this morning and you can volunteer today to participate in these exciting visits. You could also connect us with a host school—for example, your alma mater, a college in your old district, or the university your grandchild attends. Our staff will then follow up with you to make the arrangements. Liz Ardagna runs the program for us and has all the information you need.

Perhaps Liz would just stand up for a moment so everyone knows who she is, if they haven't met her yet. She does a great job for us in coordinating this program.

As was mentioned earlier, we have continued our excellent partnership with the Stennis Center For Public Service in the administration of the program. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Liz, but also to Brother Rogers of the Stennis Center for their fine work. Brother Rogers has worked with us for many years now and is located at the Mississippi State University, and has done a wonderful job as well.

The Civics Connection, a Webcast series that is broadcast to high school civics classes across the country, has become an extension of the Congress to Campus program. It is a partnership with the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida. I am pleased to announce that since our last annual meeting these Webcasts have officially been added to the advanced placement government and politics syllabus for high schools nationwide. Now a high school student participating in the AP civics program at the school will benefit from the experience of our former Members since our Webcasts are incorporated into the AP civics curriculum. This is a great achievement of which we are very proud.

Since our last annual meeting, we have also continued our relationship with the People to People Program, an

organization that provides hands-on learning opportunities for elementary school, middle school, and high school students visiting Washington, D.C. On each visit, former Members meet and speak with students about the experience of public service, their personal experiences in Congress, and the value of character and leadership.

In the spring of 2012, these speaking engagements took on a new congressional panel format. The events take place on Capitol Hill and not only feature a former Member as speaker, but also several Hill staffers and interns. This gives students the opportunity to learn what it is really like to work in the U.S. Congress. People to People visits are often in the middle of the business day, and again we are grateful to those former Members who take the time out of their busy schedules to connect with students touring our Nation's Capital.

Finally, I want to say again how grateful we are to all of those who have made Congress to Campus such a success in the 35 years that we have had it and to strongly encourage all of my friends and colleagues to participate in the program, either by making a visit to a school or by recommending a school to host the program. As you know, a democracy can prosper only if its citizens are both informed and engaged, and as former legislators we have a particular opportunity and responsibility to encourage such involvement. This program gives us the opportunity to do so, particularly with our young people.

Again, thank you all very much for participating and for paying attention this morning.

Thank you, Connie.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you, Matt, for your leadership in this program and the report that you have given, the great work. Again, I also give a tip of the hat and congratulations to Jack Buechner, working in partnership with you.

As you may recall from our last report to Congress, the association has put some energy and focus into the question of bipartisanship and civility in our political dialogue. Last year we announced the creation of a new undertaking for our association, the Common Ground Project. The purpose of the Common Ground Project is to involve citizens in a dialogue about the issues of the day, to have a vigorous debate that is both partisan and productive, and to benefit from the experience of respecting a different point of view. Some of our existing undertakings already fit into that category very nicely, with that objective, for example, the Congress to Campus program that you just heard about.

To give you more background about this Common Ground Project, I invite my colleague from Michigan, former Member Bob Carr, to share a report. Thank you, Bob. We did a Congress to Campus program together a few years ago.

Ms. KENNELLY. The Chair wishes to recognize that our president is here, Dennis Hertel, and one of the finest Members that we have had for years, Bill Hughes is also here. We are delighted to have both of you. Of course, Dennis has given us yeoman's service.

Bob.

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Barbara, and thank you, Connie, so much.

I just want to rise for a second to talk about the Common Ground Project. Of course, we are a bipartisan organization and everything we do is bipartisan. We have bipartisan leadership, and our programs, our Congress to Campus program, everything we do is in a bipartisan way. We are also mindful that sitting Members of Congress and the Congress itself faces much different pressures than we do. But yet this organization is in a unique position because we have both been inside and outside of the Congress, and because we are supporters of the Congress, the institution of the Congress, and hence its Members, we think that we are in a unique situation to maybe bridge that gap between the divisiveness and the lack of civility and the discourse that we are seeing today and hope to improve that.

That is what the Common Ground Project is really all about. It seeks to organize our efforts and focus them more deliberately on this issue of the discourse in this country. Now, you can't just focus on Members of Congress. You have to focus on the country itself, so that is what some of our programs are all about.

For example, just recently at George Washington University, in cooperation with their Graduate School of Political Management and the Concord Coalition, we held a one-day event where we brought students together to work on a budget simulation so that people of a variety of points of view, different philosophies and different partisan backgrounds, could work together through the numbers and on the tradeoffs of a budget. At the end of the day we all didn't agree on everything, but we managed to come to some conclusions, and we weren't throwing dishes and napkins at one another over the process. Just through that kind of pilot learning project we were able to, I think, demonstrate to some graduate students at George Washington University how the process can be done in a productive way.

Also the Common Ground Project is partnering with some like-minded organizations around the country. One is the National Institute of Civil Discourse in Arizona. Our organization and their's brought together a group of bipartisan former Members and current Members to have a discourse on what kinds of things we might do to lower the temperature, tune down the anger, and get to a more productive civil discourse. It was a good discussion, and our goal in this Common Ground Project is to continue to expand our activities and expand our cooperation with other like-minded organizations and not just speak to more Members of Congress, but to speak to the American public.

Thank you, Connie.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you, Bob. We appreciate your efforts, Bob, on behalf of this important undertaking as we expand it and hope it will make a difference beyond our association.

A great example of how powerful and productive bipartisanship can be is our Annual Congressional Golf Tournament. Leave it to a sport to bring us together. It is chaired by our immediate past president, Dennis Hertel, and by former board member Ken Kramer of Colorado. I would now like to yield to Ken to give us a brief report about this charitable golf tournament.

Mr. KRAMER. Thank you very much.

Connie, congratulations on your ascension to the presidency. I look forward very much, as I know others do, to working with you. You are going to do a great job. And to my fellow co-chair of the golf tournament, Dennis Hertel, I want to thank him for his efforts. He is now retired, and we are on somewhat of a more equal status than we were before, so I look forward to working with him for many, many years.

Five years ago we took what was a 35-year-old tradition, which is our annual golf tournament, which as many of you know pits Republicans against Democrats, and we gave it a bigger mission. We converted it into a charitable golf tournament to aid severely wounded veterans returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our beneficiaries, Warfighter Sports, a program of Disabled Sports USA, and Project Hope, which is a program of the Professional Golfers Association of America, used golf and other sports to help our wounded veterans readjust to life after sustaining such severe injuries. They involve the entire family in the sport and they provide equipment and training. Our fifth charitable golf tournament will be held on July 23 at Army Navy Country Club, and if you add up the revenues from our five tournaments, we will have raised over one quarter of a million dollars now for these outstanding programs that I mentioned.

During each of our past tournaments, we have had literally dozens of current and former Members come out from both sides of the aisle to support our wounded troops. They in turn have met with dozens of wounded warriors, many of whom provide us with golf demonstrations and play in our foursomes. I might add that there have been some double amputees included in their numbers who hit further and straighter than a lot of our members. It is an incredibly humbling, rewarding, and memorable experience to spend a day in the presence of these inspiring men and women.

We have two outstanding current Member honorary chairs, JOE BACA of California and ANDREW CRENSHAW of

Florida, and I want to thank them, as well as Dennis, for all that they have done to make our tournament such a success. I also want to thank all of our sponsors for their generous contributions, with particular thanks to Disabled Sports USA and the PGA for being such steadfast and invaluable partners. It really is an honor to help our Nation's heroes in this very small way.

Again, the next tournament is July 23. Let us know, if you haven't done so yet, of your interest in either playing or becoming involved with helping with sponsorship.

Thank you so much for your time.

Ms. KENNELLY. The Chair would like to mention that the first time I played in the golf tournament I said, Where are the good golfers? And they said, What do you think? As a Congressperson, you have to work down here, and on weekends you have to work at home. There are only about two good golfers, so anybody who hesitates because they think they are not good enough, feel free.

Ms. MORELLA. We appreciate Ken's report and his leadership in helping our wounded warriors. We are so honored that we can play a small role in the rehabilitation of these amazing young men and women.

Now it is my distinct honor, truly an honor and a privilege, to present our 2012 Distinguished Service Award to Representative Gabrielle Giffords of the great State of Arizona. Bestowing our association's highest award on Gabby Giffords was an easy decision. In all her endeavors in public service, she has led by example and commendable distinction in courage. I have seen her as a unifying force here on the House floor as well as in the Nation.

As you well know, her challenging schedule, which includes focusing on getting well and still working on those issues that are so dear to her, absorbs her time. Therefore, we didn't want to impose any further on her schedule. But we are thrilled that on her behalf one of her very best friends in the House of Representatives, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, will accept the award on Gabby's behalf.

But before we invite her to come up and make comments, another friend of Gabby's, our former Member Jim Kolbe of Arizona, I would like to invite him to make a few comments.

Mr. KOLBE. Madam Speaker, the gentlelady from Maryland—Connie—thank you very much for yielding to me. It is a wonderful privilege to be back with my colleagues, former Members, here today on the floor of the House of Representatives and especially for me to be able to participate in this award.

I had the privilege of serving for 22 years in the House of Representatives representing District 5 and then District 8 in the House of Representatives—Districts 5 and 8 from the State of Arizona. I retired in 2007 and was succeeded by Representative Gabrielle, or as we all know and love her, Gabby Giffords.

But my association with Gabby runs back much further than that. When I was in Tucson, even before I became a member of the Arizona State legislature, I knew Gabby Giffords and her family, who were a very prominent business family in Tucson, and she was deeply involved in the community even then as a very young woman.

I had the privilege of not serving with her but serving alongside her, serving from here while she was in the Arizona State Legislature, and she had a very distinguished career in the legislature, as she did here, reaching across the aisle, accomplishing legislation because she was able to talk to people and compromise and reach those kinds of decisions that needed to be made. She has been involved for years with the education of young people in our community. She is loved by virtually everybody in Arizona and certainly in Tucson.

When I announced my retirement shortly before 2006, Gabby Giffords quickly jumped into the race as a sitting member of the Arizona State Legislature. She didn't hesitate. She left the legislature to campaign full-time. She threw herself, as she did with everything, body and soul, into her campaign to serve here in Congress. Even though I had represented the district as a Republican for 22 years, she won quite easily in 2006 as a Democrat. And then, of course, was reelected in 2008 and reelected again in 2010 in a district that was at least marginally Republican in its registration, an indication, I think, of how Gabby Giffords was able, and continues to be able, to reach across the aisle.

After she was elected to the Congress, I got to know both Gabby and her then later husband, Mark Kelly, a lot better. And it was a wonderful relationship that they had together, and a wonderful relationship I had with them and the relationship they had with our community, again, loved by everyone.

Gabby was successful, I think, because she did reach across the aisle, because she didn't worry about partisan labels, because she thought about how she could accomplish things. And it is in that spirit that, following the tragic accident, we have formed the National Institute of Civil Discourse, which has been mentioned here. And our new executive director, Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer, is with us here today.

I think it is a real tribute to Gabby and a real tribute to all of us who care about bipartisanship and about achieving things in this House of Representatives that this organization came about in her spirit. I think Gabby is the definition of an eternal optimist. No matter what kind of trouble she faces, no matter what travails she has, she is always cheerful, always looking forward, always looking up, and always thinking about what is the very best thing that is happening in our community, in our State, and how she can make things better for all of us.

So it is a great pleasure, I think, for our association to make this award to somebody that I think has made a real contribution to bipartisanship in the House of Representatives.

I now would ask Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ to come forward and accept this award on behalf of Congresswoman Gabby Giffords. I hope you will let Gabby know how much we miss her and appreciate her good work and how honored we are that she is receiving this award.

We have also invited Members to send a personal note, which we have collected in a book which I'm going to hand to you in just a moment. It's a great pleasure and honor for me to present our 2012 Distinguished Service Award to Gabriel Giffords of Arizona.

Ms. MORELLA. Mr. Kolbe, if I may read it. It is very small print.

The plaque is inscribed as follows:

The 2012 Distinguished Service Award is presented by the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress to Congresswoman Gabrielle "Gabby" Giffords for her exceptional public service and bravery in the face of adversity. Through her efforts on the House Armed Services Committee; the House Science, Space and Technology Committee; the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces; the Subcommittee on Readiness; the Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation; and as Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, Congresswoman Giffords worked tirelessly to represent not only Arizonans, military families, and veterans, but all Americans. Congresswoman Giffords served her country with honor, reaching across party lines to forge bipartisan solutions to our nation's problems. Even after the tragic events of January 8, 2011, Congresswoman Giffords continues to inspire all Americans with her incredible strength, courage, and perseverance. Congresswoman Giffords is an example to us all, and her former colleagues from both sides of the aisle salute her.

Washington, D.C., July 10, 2012.

And all of that is on this plaque which I hand to you, along with the portfolio of letters of congratulations.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much.

Mr. KOLBE. Thank you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you so much, Madam president, Madam Chair. Wow, all on one plaque. That's impressive.

I also, Madam President, have additional letters that were sent to my office for the book. So I'm the repository going forward, and so I will make sure that we add to this for Gabby.

Good morning, and thank you, Congressman Kolbe, for that warm introduction and for all of you for being here. It really is a privilege to address such a distinguished group, one that I hope to not join for quite awhile, but that I'm really glad exists and exists in a bipartisan way, because it is important to note, especially given the struggles that we're going through right now to come together and work together, that there isn't a Republican Former Members of Congress Association or a Democratic Former Members

of Congress Association. There is one united association. We are all Americans, and we should all work hard to work together.

I also want to acknowledge the presence of Gabby's former chairman of the Armed Services Committee, my former colleague, Ike Skelton from Missouri. It is wonderful to be with you.

There really is no one more suited to receive your association's highest award, the Distinguished Service Award, than my dear friend, Gabby Giffords.

Gabby, as has already been said, but can't be oft repeated, has always led by example, as an incredible public servant, woman, and friend. Gabby was the third woman in Arizona's history to be elected to serve in the U.S. House. Gabby worked tirelessly over the years to represent not only Arizonans, military families, and veterans, but all Americans. Here in Congress, we all came to recognize that bright smile of Gabby's which people so often refer to when they're talking about her, as she reached across party lines to forge bipartisan solutions to our Nation's problems. In doing so, she has inspired so many people with her strength in the wake of unimaginable tragedy and heartbreak.

For more than a year, she's been working hard every day to get back to full strength. And Gabby never does anything halfway, and her service in Congress, as well as her recovery, is no exception. I'm so proud of my friend for her commitment to her constituents, to her work ethic and her perseverance.

It will always be one of the great treasures of my life to have met Gabby Giffords, to have served with her in Congress, but especially to share our special friendship. She has always been an inspiration to me, and seeing her become an inspiration to the entire world warms my heart, I'm sure, as much as it warms yours.

I know that you all believe, as Gabby does, that our country must be strong enough to come together to solve the challenges before us. Compared to the obstacles that Gabby has overcome in the past year, surely this is an attainable goal. We must recommit ourselves to working together to fulfill the promises of our democracy and a commitment to making America stronger so that everyone can fulfill their American Dream. And this association really is the epitome, the example. You could lead by example and be the catalyst and help us forge the way toward compromise, toward working together.

So many of you, looking across the Chamber, have served in the time when relationships were much tighter, when the fabric interwoven between the two parties was really thicker, and we could learn from your experience. I would urge you and encourage you to reach out to the leadership of both parties in the Congress and try to help us because we are going to have a better Nation if we work together. I know it is possible. Even from the political position that I hold in addition to my service in Congress, I know that it is possible. I know there are committed Members on both sides of the aisle because I work with them every day. So I would urge you to extend your involvement in the political and public policy process and help us make things work and get things done.

So on behalf of Gabby and her husband Mark Kelly, thank you for recognizing her today. I know it means a great deal to both of them. Thank you so much.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you, Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for accepting the award, but also for your very inspiring words. And that is true; that is what we are all about. Thank you.

You know, I'm not in the habit of giving plaques, but I do have another commendation that I would like to share with you, and this is to our immediate past president, Dennis Hertel of Michigan. I would like to ask him to join me at the dais.

Dennis, we wanted to make sure that we gave you something to indicate your wonderful 2 years as president of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress. You have worked tirelessly. You've made the organization the very best and the most active that it has ever been, and I inherit from you an outstanding example of what a little nonprofit can accomplish if people who are committed lend their energy and their expertise. I'm going to try to follow your lead. It won't be easy. I think your shoe size is much larger than mine, but I'll try. But you don't have heels; therefore, it makes it a little more difficult for women, but we can do it.

So on behalf of the association, I have a plaque here which is inscribed as follows:

> Presented to the Honorable Dennis M. Hertel in recognition and appreciation of his strong leadership as president of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress. His tremendous enthusiasm and effectiveness will always be remembered by his grateful colleagues.
>
> Washington, D.C., July 10, 2012

It's heavy, but it is also heavy in terms of its importance and significance to us of the work that you have done. Thank you, Dennis.

Mr. HERTEL. Well, that's a very big surprise, and I thank you very much. It's a great honor. It is especially an honor because of the people I was able to work with these past 2 years, and all of the time all of us have worked with the association.

We did our retirement day for the Members last time, and these honored people like Ike Skelton and Dave Obey and Jim Oberstar, people I looked to all my life, I look at my governor today, all of the people I get to serve with on a regular basis, that we all do, it is such an honor. We have never had more people participate. We've never had a greater board for the association and all of the officers than ever before, but especially the staff that we all look to. We haven't been able to even give them a raise because economic times are tough for everybody, and yet we have the same enthusiasm, and they do more and more all the time. So I can't say enough about Liz and Dava and Sabine and Peter, who make this association what it is. And it keeps growing and getting better all the time. It is surprising, I think all of us, as to the capacity that the staff has to help us channel our experience and ideals into a way of continuing to serve citizens and our country.

Connie, I always tell the school kids that come that the biggest change in Congress is the number of women serving and the leadership roles that they take. And so now you'll be the president, only the second woman since the legendary Lindy Boggs, whom we all loved so much. I can't think of a better person. I know when I asked you to do this, I thought we needed some class in our organization; and if there is any person who gives it, it is Connie. Her leadership here in the Congress, her bipartisan leadership overall, and her experience in the international field and her ability to energize all of us and her enthusiasm, and the fact that she is the most gracious person I know, really, I think, serves all of us. We are so fortunate to have her leadership going forward.

I want to talk about some of the international programs we have been fortunate to have.

Our former Members project with China is about 2 years old. In 2010, I was privileged to participate in a bipartisan former Member delegation to Beijing as well as Shanghai. The purpose of the trip was to learn about China firsthand, engage Chinese officials in a frank dialogue, shed some light on current U.S. politics and foreign policy, and gain knowledge about U.S.-Chinese trade relations from U.S. corporate representatives in China and Asia.

One thing that we found in that first trip, and it has gone on since in our delegations, they want to find out about our political system and about how we, as Congressmen and -women, think. They get to meet with delegations that are coming from the active Members, but it is always in and out, as we know. But for them to meet with us for several days and hear us out, hour after hour, about our vast concerns about human rights and freedom and trade and what it's going to mean in foreign policy and defense and all the rest, I think, serves it so well that what we've seen now is that we've had five delegations go, and we have had delegations go of former Senators and former House Members, two a year.

This fall we are going to be sending our sixth delegation. We've been meeting with the highest ranking people. We've met with their speaker. We've met with their foreign policy secretary, their commerce secretary, the highest people, and we have also made

sure that we've met with the NGOs, and we've been meeting with corporate America doing business in China about their issues and problems.

We always make sure that we meet with several university groups of students. And those are, I think, the most encouraging and give us the most enthusiasm of all, the visits that we have, because we see in them the future that we see in our own students. And we see that they are bridging that gap of freedom and communication with us in this new age that we live in.

We have now begun to incorporate a D.C. component also to the project. We have good meetings with current Members involved in the U.S.-Chinese relationship. We are bringing them in more, and we've hosted more Chinese visitors here on the Hill. We are the perfect conduit to do that in all respects, not only for China, but all the other study groups that we have. These former Member delegations to China and the events here in D.C. are very productive and a great way of showing the important contribution that we made in one of the most important areas that we can—internationally.

There are a number of other international projects involving former Members of Congress. Several years ago, we created the International Election Monitors Institute under the leadership of then-president Jack Buechner. My idea was we were sending over 100 Members to the Ukraine and other places for elections. We found that when we were with people from other nations—from Belgium, Canada, and other nations—we were looked at as more impartial than when we were just four Americans together. So we found that out very quickly, and we actually met with former Congressman Cheney, the Vice President, and Rumsfeld, and built at that point a bipartisan effort, and then we went overseas and were able to have, first, the Canadians meet with us. And they said "yes" right away, and some of them are here today with us, and also with our friends in the EU, in the Association of Former Members of the European Parliament, also.

What we do is we conduct multiple workshops for former legislators to train them for elections. What we found, too, was we have a lot of former parliamentarians going overseas for elections—somebody forgot to train them before they got there. It is true that we do have the instincts to be able to sniff out what is illegal and what is wrong in a system, and we are able to figure that out very quickly just because of our experience and our instincts, but we still have to train them properly so that they realize how important it is not only to be perceived impartially but to, in fact, be impartial and to have the knowledge of those particular systems.

And so we have sent delegations to Morocco, Ukraine, and Iraq. It has mainly been possible through the Canadian International Development Agency, and we thank them very much for their support. The original intent was to train former legislators and prepare them only for observing elections. We have since realized, with our partners, that we have to have a broader, more planned effort as far as strengthening democracy. We can help an emerging democracy as it seeks to implement an election result and facilitate a peaceful transition of power, but also leading up to that election to make sure that it is fair as far as the media and all other concerns. We can help a legislative branch as it tries to assert its oversight power over the executive branch once it is elected. Given this expansion in scope, we have decided that the International Election Monitors Institute no longer is the appropriate vehicle—or, as my wife said, it is far too long a title anyway—for such an ambitious undertaking. We, therefore, disbanded it and created a new entity this year, the Global Democracy Initiative.

I am pleased that with us today are some of our colleagues from Canada and Europe and that tomorrow we'll have the first board meeting of the new Global Democracy Initiative. Our visitors from Canada are Don Boudria, Dorothy Dobbie, Leo Duguay, Francis LeBlanc, and Lily Oddie. They are joined by our good friend Richard Balfe, who represents the former members association of the European Parliament and is our current president. We thank all of them for joining us at our annual meeting and for all the work that they help us with throughout the year and for their friendship and partnership we've been able to enjoy.

As Connie mentioned earlier, we have also begun working with the U.S. Department of State. This partnership comes in several variations. We have connected bipartisan teams of former Members of Congress with U.S. Embassies overseas via Web casts. For example, following the State of the Union address, we communicated with audiences in Denmark and Tel Aviv, first giving them an extensive overview of the President's message and then engaging in a lengthy question and answer.

Another State Department-sponsored program brings former Members directly to the embassies and consulates overseas. Sometimes former Members travel specifically at the invitation of the Department, for example, when the State Department brought Connie Morella and Pat Schroeder to Poland late last year for the third annual European Congress of Women. Sometimes the State Department, under Hillary Clinton's leadership—who has reached out to the Former Members Association with her staff, thinking that we are a very vital and active asset—they will piggyback. If we let the State Department know who's taking a trip overseas, then they will connect with embassies and consulates and NGOs in those countries that the person is in, saving our government money, but also extending the kind of people that we, as former Members, can communicate with and reaching foreign audiences.

I think that's just one example of the kind of thing we can be doing more of in the future. I already know that the experience and breadth of knowledge of the former Members is limitless. And when I see that the more that we can reach young people, the more we can reach our citizens, the more we can reach out to the world in communication, it seems to me that the greatest problem we have today is not that we don't have more information. It's that we don't have better communication.

And it seems that when we're able to reach out, that that is the best possible thing we can do for democracy in our country here at home, having people have a greater understanding and communication about the issues and the problems and the same overseas. I think that the people here in our association have shown that they have the leadership, the knowledge, the ability and, most of all, that they're willing to make that kind of a sacrifice of their time to reach out and go overseas and go around our country talking to junior colleges and universities and citizen audiences about how we can have better communication and, most importantly, a greater democracy.

So thanks very much for all of your help. I am really very honored. Thank you.

Ms. MORELLA. Dennis has demonstrated his commitment to the programs of the Association of Former Members; also, his appreciation to our international parliamentarians who joined with us in partnership on so many wonderful programs. I do hope, Dennis, that you continue with that kind of involvement that you have demonstrated. And thank you for your kind words too.

Another important international undertaking involving former Members of Congress is our Middle East Fellows Program. Now in its second year, the project brings young professionals from the Middle East to Washington, D.C., for a 1-month immersion program. It is chaired by former Members Scott Klug and Larry LaRocco. And now I would like to call on my friend and former colleague Larry LaRocco of Idaho to give us some more details. Thank you, Larry.

Mr. LAROCCO. Well, thank you, Connie. I want to send my best wishes and appreciation for all you do for the association. It was great to serve with you here in the House. And I look forward to serving with you as a board member.

In the spring of 2009, the Former Members of Congress Association began a partnership with Legacy International, a Virginia-based NGO with 30 years of experience in citizen exchange programs, for the Middle East Legislative Fellows Program, or LFP. Initiated by the Department of State and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the LFP hosts young professionals from Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco,

and Oman for a month-long fellowship in a congressional office or a prominent NGO in Washington, D.C.

The LFP is designed to promote a positive relationship between the United States and the Middle East and the gulf states which, in light of the Arab Spring, is now more vital than ever. The fellows, candidates with strong leadership skills who represent the top talent in their fields, have the opportunity to gain practical experience and direct interaction with the U.S. Government and its officials. This is an invaluable opportunity, as many of the fellows are responsible for drafting policy in their respective countries and, of course, are their future leaders.

Our association connects the fellows with former Members whom they meet with several times over the course of their stay. The former Members act as a kind of mentor to these young men and women through one-on-one meetings, roundtable discussions, and by attending program discussions and events. The former Member mentor program provides a unique experience to the fellows as well as their mentors. While the fellows learn more about the congressional system and American politics, former Members learn about the culture and politics of the Middle East.

In an exciting extension to the LFP, at the conclusion of each program, a team of former Members complete the exchange by leading a delegation to the Middle East to conduct workshops and gain firsthand experience within the region. I was privileged to lead such a delegation, along with my cochair Scott Klug, to Kuwait and Oman. The trip was a distinct opportunity to learn about and meet a broad spectrum of groups and individuals involved in all aspects of the democracy, governance, and the economy.

The goal of this program is to seek a better understanding between cultures and establish an avenue of dialogue between nations. LFP is an unprecedented opportunity to augment a constructive political and cultural discourse between the U.S. and the Middle East. And I am very proud that our association can be part of such a vital dialogue. We maintain this program and will be active again next year with Legacy International. Thank you.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you, Larry, for your leadership and your active involvement in this new and very great program.

Ms. KENNELLY. Madam Chairwoman?

Ms. MORELLA. Madam Speaker.

Ms. KENNELLY. I would like to introduce for a moment the gentleman from Maryland, STENY HOYER, one of our leaders in the Congress. We are very, very proud of Congressman HOYER because he has taken an interest in the former Members, and he has taken the time today to come talk with us.

Ms. MORELLA. And from the great State of Maryland, of course.

Mr. HOYER. Well, I'm sorry I'm a little late. I always try to come by to say hello to former Members. One never knows when one is going to be a former Member. So in the expectation that that will be, at some point in time, where I will be, I want to make sure that the present Members understand how important the former Members were to creating the institution that we have and that we're all very proud of.

I apologize for my voice. I have got an awful allergy that I'm fighting, but beyond that, I'm fine.

I want to say to all of you, welcome. I know that a little earlier today, I was at a fundraiser—I know you understand those kinds of things—where we honored our colleague Gabby Giffords. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was here; is that correct, Connie?

And I'm pleased to see Connie Morella here, my colleague from Maryland, and my very long-time friend who I met when she was about 2 years of age, some 40 years ago, Beverly Byron from western Maryland who has remained so active. And we're very proud of them in Maryland. But we're proud of all of you as well. I'm glad to be your friend and your colleague, and I welcome you back and look forward to seeing you.

George—where's George? George and I walked in together. I asked him what he was doing. And he had some billable hours walking up the steps. Good for you, George.

But I want to say, Madam Speaker, how proud I was to have served with you. Barbara and I came in within months of one another in special elections. I think Barbara came in about 5 months after I did in 1981; and she served in a very distinguished way, as all of you did as well.

I don't know whether Nancy came by or if John was here, but I know that they—oh, they weren't here, yet. Hope springs eternal. But I wanted to welcome you here and join you here.

We have a caucus now that I will go down to. We are going to talk about repealing health care today on the floor of the House. I hope you are not holding your breath. But in any event, that will be the subject of our debate this week, I think.

I want to say to all of you that I hope that you are trying to play a role in energizing the public to the understanding of how critical it is for us to meet the fiscal challenge that confronts this country. In my view, the most important thing this Congress can do in the next 6 months is to take very substantive, effective action on behalf of getting our country on a fiscally sustainable, credible path. In my view, that's the single most stimulative thing we could do for the economy. It would give confidence to the world that America, in fact, will be the economic and national security anchor that it has been for all of our lifetimes, frankly. And that is threatened by this inability to come to grips with meeting the fiscal challenges that confront us.

I tell people all over this country, Greece doesn't have the resources to solve its problems. It's going to need help from outside. America has the resources to solve our fiscal challenge. What we need is the political will and the courage to do so. And I would hope that you would take, as part of your responsibility, as someone who has worked in this institution—and frankly, many of you worked in it at a time when it was more possible to work together across the aisle in a constructive way to solve the problems that confront our country.

I have three daughters, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Some of you have more of all of those, I understand. But I'm very concerned about the world that we're going to leave them. My father's generation was called the Greatest Generation. Not only did they defeat the terrorists of their time, but they came home and built the greatest economy the world has ever seen.

In my view, over the last decades, we have, unfortunately, not built on that legacy in a way that would have made them proud or that will make our children proud of us when we leave. So I'm hopeful that you will play a continuing role in trying to bring the country together and the Congress together.

My view is—and I said this a little earlier this morning—that we probably won't get anything of real substance done before November 6. And none of us know what will happen on November 6. But between November 7 and December 31 or January 2, when sequestration takes place, we will see the biggest fiscal challenge this country has confronted in the 31 years that I have been in the Congress of the United States. The Bush tax cuts expire. The payroll tax cut expires. The unemployment insurance expires. The estate tax, dividend tax, the capital gains tax expire with the Bush tax cuts. The sustainable growth rate reimbursement for docs expires December 31. The AMT expires on the 31st, and sequestration takes place on January 2. If we took no action, that would be a devastating blow to the economy, to the country, and to international confidence in America's ability to lead.

So these are serious times, and I believe that all of you are continuing to be very significant leaders in our country with an experience that very few of us are given and, that is, service in this body. I would urge all of you to take it as your personal responsibility to try to help energize our people and our Members in acting responsibly, with courage and with will so that America can continue to be the kind of country that all of us believe it to be and want it to be.

So thank you for what you have done—not to get us into this bad spot because most of you were not here when we really started going down this road pretty steeply. But you are uniquely capable, in my opinion, to help us confront this challenge, which

we can confront because we have the resources, if we have the will.

God bless you. Thank you very much.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you. Thank you, STENY, for your presence and for your serious and important message. We appreciate it very much.

So, folks, not all of our programs focus exclusively on former Members. We have a number of projects that benefit from former Member leadership but involve primarily current Members and their peers overseas. We call these programs Congressional Study Groups; and our focus is on Germany, Turkey, Japan, and Europe as a whole.

These programs are now under new management, so to speak, at the association because since our last report to Congress, we've been fortunate to secure the services of Sabine Schleidt, who is our director of international programs. She has brought remarkable expansion to our current Member portfolio and has implemented several new initiatives. We are, indeed, fortunate to have someone so capable oversee this effort.

So to give you more background about these very exciting Congressional Study Groups, I invite another former Member of the association, Jack Buechner of Missouri, to the dais. Jack, would you give a report.

Mr. BUECHNER. Thank you, Madam President.

The Congressional Study Groups are, I think, an extraordinary extension of our former service to assist the current Members. I want to report on the work of the study groups on Germany, Turkey, Japan, and our newest study group, which is the Congressional Study Group on Europe. These bipartisan programs for current Members of Congress serve as invaluable tools for dialogue between lawmakers and serve as educational forums to create better understanding and cooperation between the United States and our most important strategic and economic partners.

The Congressional Study Group on Germany is the association's flagship international program and is one of the largest and most active parliamentary exchange programs between the U.S. Congress and the legislative branch of any other country. Celebrating almost 30 years of active programming, the study group offers German and American lawmakers the unique opportunity to candidly discuss the most pertinent issues of the day, including the pressing international challenges affecting both nations and two continents. The 2012 chairman and vice chairman of the Congressional Study Group on Germany in the House of Representatives are Representative PHIL GINGREY, a Republican from Georgia, and TIM RYAN, a Democrat from Ohio. And in the Senate, Senator JEFF SESSIONS, a Republican from Alabama, serves as cochair. And his study group is in the process of finding a new Democratic cochair.

The study group's programming consists of periodic roundtable discussions on Capitol Hill for Members of Congress featuring visiting dignitaries from Germany or U.S. Governmental officials. In addition, annual seminars are conducted abroad and at home, as well as study tours geared toward senior congressional staff.

A few highlights for the Study Group on Germany's events on Capitol Hill during this year's programming include: a luncheon discussion with Gunter Krings, the vice chairman of the CDU/CSU; a breakfast featuring Ms. Emily Haber, deputy foreign minister of Germany; a breakfast with Philipp Missfelder, foreign affairs spokesman for the CDU/CSU; and a luncheon with Philip Rosler, the Vice Chancellor of Germany. The study group also hosted a working luncheon on cybersecurity and the fight against terrorism, joining senior Senate staff with a visiting delegation from the German Federal College of Security studies.

The Congressional Study Group on Germany's main pillar of programming is the annual Congress-Bundestag seminar that alternates between the U.S. and Germany. These 5-day-long conferences present Members of Congress and their counterparts at the Bundestag with an opportunity to come together for a series of in-depth discussions focusing on issues affecting trans-Atlantic relations.

In April 2012, the 29th annual seminar took place in Washington and Atlanta. Topics for discussion during those annual Congress-Bundestag seminars included the ongoing financial global downturn, specifically the development of the euro zone crisis, sustaining economic growth, relations between the European Union and the United States, foreign policy challenges, such as Iran, and energy security. And during this programming year, the study group also took two senior congressional staff tour delegations, each consisting of eight chiefs of staff, to Berlin and Brussels.

Since its establishment, the Congressional Study Group on Germany has been receiving generous support from the German Marshall fund of the United States. And the association would like to thank Craig Kennedy, the president of GMF, for his trust in our programming. To assist with administrative expenses, the association also receives additional funding from a group of organizations making up the study group's business advisory council.

This group includes Airbus Americas, Allianz, BASF, Daimler, Deutsche Telekom, DHL Americas, Eli Lilly and Company, EMD Serono, Fresenius, Lufthansa, RGIT, and Volkswagen.

Using the successful example of the Congressional Study Group on Germany as a model, the association established the Congressional Study Group on Turkey in 2005. Given Turkey's strategic role in the region and position as a gateway between East and West, the Study Group on Turkey is essential in forging communications networks between current Members of Congress and Turkish government officials to discuss such issues as the Middle East peace process, ongoing Arab Spring developments, energy security, and avenues of cooperation in the region. The Study Group on Turkey is active only in the House of Representatives and is, like the other study groups, led by a bipartisan group of current Members of Congress. Representative GERALD CONNOLLY, Democrat of Virginia, and Representative ED WHITFIELD, Republican of Kentucky, are the cochairs.

Similar to the Congressional Study Group on Germany, the Study Group on Turkey hosts events for Members of Congress on Capitol Hill which are dedicated to U.S.-Turkey relations, an annual seminar at home or abroad, and events and study tours geared toward senior congressional staff. During the 2012 May recess, the study group brought six chiefs of staff to Turkey to learn about Turkish domestic policies and discuss the critical issues facing the U.S.-Turkey bilateral relationship.

The Congressional Study Group on Turkey regularly has the pleasure to feature members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and members of the Turkish government, as well as U.S. government officials who come to its Capitol Hill events. The annual U.S.-Turkey seminar is a significant aspect of the study group programming for each year. The seminar brings U.S. and Turkish legislators together with policymakers and business representatives to examine important bilateral policies and transnational issues such as the ongoing developments in the region—terrorism and energy security just to name two.

The seventh annual U.S.-Turkey seminar took place in Ankara, Patara, and Istanbul in October 2011. The eighth annual seminar will take place in Washington this fall. Topics of discussion for this year's seminar will focus on stability in the region, prospects for the global economy, and the growing U.S.-Turkey relations. I presume there will be some discussions about the Syrian-Turkish border, also.

The Congressional Study Group on Turkey continues to receive generous funding from the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, TEPAV, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, as well as a group of organizations making up the study group's business advisory council. Currently, the business advisory council of the study group includes Eli Lilly and Company and the Turkish-American Business Council.

The association also organizes and administers the Congressional Study Group on Japan. Founded in 1993, the Congressional Study Group on Japan brings together Members of the U.S. Congress and members of the Japanese Diet for a series of discussions covering issues of mutual concern. As with the other study groups, the Japan study group is chaired in a bipartisan fashion. In the House of Representatives,

Congressman JIM MCDERMOTT, Democrat of Washington, and Congresswoman SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, Republican of West Virginia, serve as cochairs. In the Senate, Senators JIM WEBB, Democrat of Virginia, and LISA MURKOWSKI, Republican from Alaska, serve as cochairs.

The Congressional Study Group on Japan has been funded since its inception by the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, and the association would like to extend a special thanks and welcome to Paige Cottingham-Streater, the commission's new executive director.

The Congressional Study Group on Japan has been also able to garner the support of the Japanese business community in the District of Columbia with the creation of the business advisory council. Members of the inaugural BAC include Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Japan Railways-JR Central, Hitachi, Honda Motors, and Marubeni.

Earlier this year, the association established the Congressional Study Group on Europe. This study group was formed as a vehicle to expand our outreach and have a broader transatlantic discussion, not with just Brussels but capitals throughout Europe. In just over 6 months, the new study group has built the foundation for its programming and is delighted that Representative CHARLES DENT of Pennsylvania, Republican, and BEN CHANDLER, the Representative, Democrat from Kentucky, have agreed to serve as the cochairs. Together with those cochairs, the new study group has enrolled nearly 50 Members of Congress with a keen interest in the transatlantic community and partnership. In addition, the study group is working closely with European focus caucuses and embassies to provide Capitol Hill programming.

Program highlights thus far include policy discussions at the residences of the Czech and Belgian ambassadors, a Member briefing by the German, French, and Spanish ambassadors on recent developments in the euro zone crisis, a luncheon with the former president of the European Parliament, a breakfast with the former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, and a luncheon with Dr. Ulrike Guerot, senior fellow of the European Council on Foreign Relations, on Franco-German relations.

The association has also established a diplomatic advisory council, DAC, to enhance the dialogue with other Nations. Over a dozen ambassadors have joined the informal council because of their interest and commitment to the transatlantic dialogue, and many ambassadors have been active in our programming and policy discussions. The input and expertise of the local diplomatic community is a valued addition to the Congressional Study Groups. We are very proud that as former Members we can bring this invaluable service to current Members.

I look forward to being an active part, and playing an active part, in our continued international outreach.

Before I yield, I'd like to remind everybody that the Speaker's chair is being held by a birthday girl today. I'd like to ask every one of you to give a real polite round of applause for her 42nd birthday.

Thank you.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Jack, and Madam President, may I just for a moment interrupt. We have one of the finest leaders we have ever had in this body, Congressman Bob Michel. Would you just give us a wave.

Ms. MORELLA. I was going to mention that we are so very proud of a guy who is our role model, not only while he was in Congress as the minority leader, but since then he has come to every one of our meetings. He's been very actively involved, and I don't know, I think he has probably set the record, Bob, for the number of years, but we are so honored to have you here with us today for the example you set and your continued involvement. Thank you very much.

And, Jack, thanks. Your report demonstrates how very much involved we are in the critical issues of the day and how much we involve current Members of Congress in that sweep of international activities.

Well, so far we've heard about international programs, many of which have a history of several decades, for instance, the Congress to Campus Program, and as we wrap up our report we want to highlight projects that we conceptualize to address specific issues of the day. So I'd like to invite Senator Larry Pressler of South Dakota to talk a little bit about a symposium on the economy which is going to take place later today, as well as our partnership with the National Archives. Senator Pressler, thank you for being with us.

Mr. PRESSLER. Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador. I might say that, as we discussed earlier this morning, Harriet and I are sort of following you to Paris in that I have a 4-month teaching assignment there, which we're looking forward to very much, and I'm also going to try to suggest that they have the former Members program over there.

In any event, in my script here it says, "I understand we are under a bit of a time crunch, so I will keep my remarks brief." That must be a bit of hint.

Later today, we will bring together former Members of Congress, issue experts, and university students for a 3-hour conference entitled, "The Future Job Market: How America Can Remain Competitive in a Global Economy." I am pleased to cochair this important undertaking with former Member Bob Clement of Tennessee. The goal of the conference is to discuss the future of American jobs, the role of education, immigration, and legislation in ensuring a globally competitive workforce. We feature two keynote speakers who will focus on how they and their organizations view the future of the American economy and the American worker, some of the main issues our Nation currently faces, propose solutions and decisions which have to be made today so that we are competitive one generation from now. And I understand C-SPAN is going to cover portions of this.

After the keynote remarks, the audience will divide into several working groups composed of former Members, students, and experts. The conference will conclude with short reports from each of the groups. The issues we have identified for the working group discussions are the role of the community college system, workforce education, and job training; potential legislation and efforts at both the State and Federal levels; immigration and outsourcing; and America's current economic health and possible future economic trajectories. At the conclusion of the working group discussions, each group will report to the entire conference their findings and main discussion.

Later on tonight, I am pleased to participate in a public panel discussion at the National Archives, where we will dive further into some of the questions that arose during the conference. This panel is one of a series of panels we have had the privilege to conduct at the Archives, and I thank the Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero, for this outstanding collaboration.

Three times a year our association brings together former Members of Congress and other issue experts on some of the subjects that are featured on the front pages of our newspapers. We have talked about the current political climate. We have covered the role of race in America. We hosted a former Members panel that gave an insider's view to political campaigning, and we have focused on the 10-year anniversary of 9/11, to name just a few examples of our presentations. Clearly, these discussions are timely and important, and they're a great example of Democrats and Republicans disagreeing on some aspects, coming together on some aspects, but always treating each other with respect so that the dialogue is both civil and productive. We talked earlier about the Common Ground Project, and this is a wonderful way of implementing the concept of that program.

I think this panel series, as well as the jobs conference, are terrific examples of how active a role our association can play in addressing current issues, helping bridge a generational gap, and involving the public as well as the next generation of leaders in such a vital discussion.

I appreciate the opportunity to be involved in such important work. Thank you very much.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you very much, Senator Pressler. We look forward to participating in the panel and the Archives event this evening, too. The events you mentioned are good examples of how our association identifies current issues and plays a role in the political discourse that's so important in our form of government.

Well, in addition to the programs you've heard about so far, we're also tasked with highlighting the achievements of former Members and providing former Members with opportunities to stay connected with other former Members after leaving Capitol Hill.

One of our premiere events which achieves both these goal is the Annual Statesmanship Award Dinner. It should be stateswomanship, too, shouldn't it? We'll think about that in the future. In March of this year, we hosted our 15th dinner, and like the preceding 14, it was chaired by our good friend, Lou Frey of Florida. Lou can't be with us today, but he has asked that our colleague, Beverly Byron from the great State of Maryland, report on this year's event.

Bev, of all 15 dinners, has been one of our most active dinner committee members, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her for her tireless efforts on the phone and in many other ways in our behalf. So I yield the floor to the Beverly Byron.

Ms. BYRON. Thank you, Connie. First of all, let me say, I'm not Lou Frey, but we all owe Lou a great deal of gratitude for the enormous amount of work he has done year after year to make the statesmanship award dinner such a success that it is.

On March 6, the dinner was the 15th annual one. Over 400 guests attended. For the dinner, they decided to make things up a little bit. In addition to our traditional Statesmanship Award, we created two additional award categories: the Civic Statesmanship Award and the Corporate Statesmanship Award. We wanted to take the occasion of the 15th anniversary and present a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The theme of the evening was "A Salute to Service," and all four of our honorees very clearly fit into the category of an outstanding public servant. The focal point was the presentation of a statesmanship award which recognizes a former Member or a current Member of Congress for their devotion to public service. We were very pleased this year to recognize Senator JOHN KERRY of Massachusetts as our statesmanship honoree for his outstanding political career and his service to the country.

The Civic Statesmanship Award honored a person or nonprofit that has made a significant contribution to improving our society. The 2012 recipient was the Tug McGraw Foundation. And for the Corporate Statesmanship Award, recognizing outstanding corporate citizenship, we chose David J. McIntyre, chief executive officer of TriWest Healthcare Alliance.

And finally, we had a new award, a Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing the service to the country by a former Member of Congress. We were extremely pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the 44th president, George Herbert Walker Bush, who accepted via a video.

The evening is a lot of hard work. Don't let anybody tell you it isn't. Phone calls, et cetera. But it is a way to showcase the association and recognize outstanding public servants. Now, who helps to fund all the programs we've heard about today? The dinner is our financial lifeline. All the programs you've heard are self-financed by this association. Not a single taxpayer dollar is earmarked or appropriated for this organization and for the many projects we conduct. Therefore, a successful fundraising dinner translates into direct success for this association. Connie's looking at the budget and wants to make sure the dinner is a success. The evening is a lot of fun. It's also of great importance for our organization, and I hope that all of those former Members that are here today that haven't taken an active part in the past, when Lou calls, you will say, yes, I will take care of it.

Let me add a quick moment of congratulations to Matt and Jack Buechner on the work that they do on the Congress to Campus Program, because it's one that is absolutely critical. And finalizing, let me say to the speaker that Jack Buechner blew your cover, and I didn't have to. Thank you.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you, Bev. Thank you for your report, your tireless efforts on behalf of the organization, not just the dinner committee but also on the board and being an active participant in so many of our programs.

Well, all of the programs we've described, of course, require both leadership and staff to implement. Our association is blessed to have top people in both categories. I want to take this opportunity to thank the board of directors—they are 30 former Members divided equally between parties—for their advice and counsel. You are the best.

I also would be remiss if I didn't thank the other members of our association's executive committee: our vice president and birthday gal, Barbara Kennelly; our outgoing treasurer, Jim Kolbe; our past president, Dennis Hertel. You've all made this association a stronger and better organization than it's ever been, and I thank you for your time and energy and commitment, and I hope I can continue to count on your counsel and the counsel of all of the former Members who are here and those who couldn't be here.

Well, to administer all of these programs you heard about this morning takes a staff of dedicated and enthusiastic professionals. I'm going to mention their names, but I want you to know that they're only like five paid employees that run this whole organization. Isn't that incredible when we think back on our congressional offices and the staff that we had? So they've got to be pretty remarkable people to do all of this. I will mention some of the names.

Andrew Shoenig, who is our international programs officer, does such a terrific job implementing all the Capitol Hill events that you've heard about, and there are a lot of events here on the Hill.

You've heard from and about Liz Ardagna, who is our member services manager. Takes exceptionally good care of our 600 association members and all their various requests, needs, and inquiries. Anytime I ask for something, I get an immediate response, and she follows through. Thank you, Liz, for all that you do.

Esra Alemdar is our international programs manager, with particular focus on the wonderful Turkey program—which is so critically important at this time—that you heard about earlier.

Sabine Schleidt is our international programs director. She oversees all the current Member programs, which are so impressive and so important, including our new Congressional Study Group on Europe.

And Peter Weichlein is the CEO. He has spent 13 years with the association and 9 years in top position. Peter's been the one who has been—you know they've been sending you messages, now turn to page such-and-such and let's go to this because we changed this format. So there's a lot of scripting that takes place, not only in terms of papers but a lot of the background work, and it doesn't happen if you don't have leadership from the top. So I want to commend the staff and particularly Pete for the work that has been done.

So in addition to a wonderful staff, we benefit very greatly from volunteers who give us their talents and their expertise pro bono. I want to mention one who is here today who has done a lot of work, Dava Guerin. She has taken on the role as our communications director. She tells our story, connects us with the media, all at a ridiculously low rate. Thank you, Dava. We really appreciate all that you do.

Now, every year at our annual meeting we ask the membership to elect new officers and board members, and in the past, we've done so in a separate business meeting of the membership, but it occurred to us there is no better place to do it than here in the Chamber of the House of Representatives. So, therefore, I'm going to read to you the names of the candidates for officers and board members. They're all running unopposed, and I, therefore, ask for a simple "aye" or "nay" vote as I present to you the list of candidates as a slate.

So, for the association's 2012 class of the board of directors, the candidates are:

Beverly Byron of Maryland
Jim Coyne of Pennsylvania
Bill Delahunt of Massachusetts
Phil English of Pennsylvania
Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut
Ken Kramer of Colorado
Larry LaRocco of Idaho
Connie Morella of Maryland
Jim Slattery of Kansas

So, ladies and gentlemen, all in favor of electing these nine former Members to a 3-year term on our board of directors, please say "yea." All opposed? Hearing no opposition, the slate has been elected by the membership.

And next we'll elect our executive committee. The candidates for a 2-year term as president and vice president are—this is a little embarrassing—Connie Morella of Maryland for president, Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut for vice president. All in favor of electing these two former Members to a 2-year term on the executive committee, please say "yea." All opposed? Hearing no opposition, the slate has been elected by the membership. Incidentally, I want you to know—I think this will be the first time in history we're going to have two gals at the helm, president and vice president. Thank you. It's a great honor.

The candidates for a one-year term on our Executive Committee are:

Jim Walsh of New York for Treasurer

Bill Delahunt of Massachusetts for Secretary

Dennis Hertel of Michigan for Past President Executive Member

All in favor of electing these three former Members to a 1-year term on our executive committee, please say "yea." All opposed? Hearing no opposition, the slate has been elected by the membership.

Thank you.

Now, for the very sad part of the meeting this morning. It's now my sad duty to inform the Congress of those former and current members who have passed away since our last report. I ask all of you, including any visitors in the gallery, to rise as I read the names, and at the end of the list we will pay our respect to their memory with a moment of silence. We honor these men and women for their service to our country. They are:

James Abdnor of South Dakota
Perkins Bass of New Hampshire
Hugh Carey of New York
Robert W. Daniel, Jr., of Virginia
Edward Derwinski of Illinois
Charles Gubser of California
Katie Hall of Indiana
Mark Hatfield of Oregon
Bill Janklow of South Dakota
Ed Jenkins of Georgia
James "Jim" Lloyd of California
Norm Lent of New York
Richard Mallary of Vermont
Matthew "Marty" Martinez of California
Clarence E. Miller of Ohio
Erwin Mitchell of Georgia
Carlos Moorhead of California
James M. Quigley of Pennsylvania
Charles Whalen, Jr., of Ohio
Howard Wolpe of Michigan
Orvin B. Fjare of Montana
Melton D. Hancock of Missouri
Frank R. Mascara of Pennsylvania
Donald Payne of New Jersey
Charles H. Percy of Illinois
Richard H. Poff of Virginia
Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming
William C. Wampler of Virginia

Thank you. You may be seated.

This concludes the 42nd report to Congress by the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress. We want to thank the Congress, the Speaker, and the minority leader for giving us the opportunity to return to this revered Chamber and to report on our association's activities, and we look forward to another active and productive year. Thank you all for being here, and I will turn it over to the speaker, Madam Speaker.

Ms. KENNELLY. The Chair, again, wishes to thank the former Members and the Members of the House and Senate who stepped in to see us.

The Chair announces that 19 former Members of Congress responded to the call of the roll.

Before terminating these proceedings, the Chair would like to invite those Members who did not respond when the rollcall was called to give their names to the Reading Clerk for inclusion in the roll.

Thank you all for coming, and I think we're looking forward to a very exciting day.

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi Joel Levenson, Congregation B'nai Jacob, Woodbridge, Connecticut, offered the following prayer:

We invoke Your blessing for good judgment, wisdom, and understanding upon this House and all of its esteemed Members. Keep them mindful of our trust. Bestow upon them strength, determination, and willpower to do instead of just to pray, to become instead of merely to wish.

Watch over the men and women who serve our country. For Your sake and ours, may our land be safe, secure, and a source of goodness and our lives blessed.

May we repair this world and fill it with decency, justice, and peace, a world for which the prophet Isaiah prayed centuries ago when he said:

> Let justice well up as water and righteousness as a mighty stream.

May the words that we pray and the deeds that we do be acceptable before You, O Lord, our ever-present inspiration, rock, and redeemer.

And let us say, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING RABBI JOEL LEVENSON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this morning to welcome Rabbi Joel Levenson of Congregation B'nai Jacob in Woodbridge, Connecticut, to the House of Representatives.

When Joel graduated from Miami University of Ohio, he thought about going to either law school or rabbinical school, but thought the world already had too many lawyers and not enough men of faith. After graduating from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and serving under Rabbi Albert Lewis—the subject of Mitch Albom's book, "Have a Little Faith"—in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Rabbi Levenson came to Woodbridge, Connecticut, where he has been the spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Jacob since 2008.

There he has gained a reputation as a dynamic and inspiring presence on the pulpit, and he; his wife, Leora, who is with us today; and his children, Shir, Sam, and Gideon, have become warm and caring members of the community. We are joined by what we call the mishpucha up in the gallery this morning, and we welcome them all today.

Over his time in Woodbridge, Rabbi Levenson has been dedicated to promoting social justice and spiritual growth throughout Connecticut, and he has worked to foster a strong sense of Jewish identity, a joyful and inspiring congregation, and innovative educational opportunities throughout the synagogue.

Rabbi Levenson personally teaches preschool classes and meets with and works with Woodbridge teenagers, including leading them on trips to Israel. He has also worked extensively with Outreach to young families. And he is a dedicated cyclist and triathlete who has taken part in the Israel ride, a