

at Potomac Town Center, PWC Youth Ambassadors, Prince William Resolves Chapter, Quantico Marine Base, Daughters of the American Revolution, Prinedale/Ridgedale Community Pride, PurdyRandom Sisters, Rippon Landing Master Association, River Oaks Community Association, Ron Haynes, Keller Williams Realty, Saint Paul United Methodist Church, Second Heritage MEWS Community Association, Steve Glasser, Thies Family, Top Ladies of Distinction (TLOD), Troop 1297, Twin Oaks Farm, Venture Crew 35, Victory Christian Preschool and Academy, Whitlock Wealth Management, Winston Family, Woodbridge Potomac Communities Civic Association, Woodbridge Women's Club, Zuniga Family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the volunteers of Keep Prince William Beautiful and in thanking them for their dedication to environmental stewardship and community beautification.

HONORING RICHARD MICHALSKI
ON HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2013

Mr. PASTOR of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rich Michalski and his long and well-respected career with the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers (IAMAW.) Throughout Rich's career with IAMAW, he has dedicated over forty-five years to the machinists, a life-long relationship that began when he joined the union himself in 1968 and will culminate with his retirement as the General Vice President, a position he has held for the past seven years.

I was first formally introduced to Rich in 1992 by Congressman Jerry Kleczka, who has always spoken highly of him and since this time, I too have grown to greatly respect and admire Rich and his steadfast commitment to IAMAW. Rich was first initiated into IAM Local Lodge 1916 at General Electric in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1968. He worked as a welder, steward, chairman of the bargaining committee, and president. From his initial beginnings with the union, Rich was always involved with IAMAW's political and legislative priorities. For twelve years he was the Democratic committeeman for his precinct and was elected a delegate to the 1980 and 1984 Democratic National Conventions. As IAM's Director of Legislative and Political Action Department, he partnered with AFL-CIO and its affiliates, and Members of Congress to promote legislative issues affecting our American laborers and their families. Thanks to Rich's most recent efforts as the General Vice President he has overseen and managed the IAM headquarters, and he has significantly contributed to actions countering the anti-union and anti-labor agenda.

Throughout my years of knowing Rich, I have truly valued the supportive friendship and long professional association that I have shared with him. On many occasions, I have relied on his intelligence and political acumen, and he has proven to be a trusted voice who has taught me a great deal over the course of our friendship. Mr. Speaker, please join me in

congratulating Rich on his retirement and long career as a committed advocate on behalf of our nation's workers, especially our machinists. It is with gratitude for these efforts that I join with Rich's family, friends, and colleagues in extending my well wishes for a much deserved retirement and happy and fulfilling future ahead.

IN HONOR OF SALLY MURPHY

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2013

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues Representatives CALVERT, CAPPS, COSTA, HUNTER, MATSUI, MCNERNEY, ROYCE, THOMPSON and WALDEN to honor Sara Hope Murphy or "Sally" to her friends, who recently retired from Wine Institute, where she was the chief public policy advocate for the California wine industry.

Sally is one of the bravest people we know. Her retirement was the result of a diagnosis for ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. It all started because she was having troubling speaking. Unfortunately now, the disease has left her unable to speak at all. But in true Sally fashion, she has not allowed that to silence her. Many of you received her letter announcing her leaving, which was characteristic of Sally. It was right up front and center, and very frank.

Sally has a long association with the United States Congress. She first came to Capitol Hill to work for Congressman Lou Frey of Florida. She then spent 10 years on the staff of THAD COCHRAN in both the House and the Senate. She worked for Congressman Henson Moore and then left the Hill to work for Pacific Telesis Group and Sprint.

However, the crowning glory of her career was going to work for Wine Institute. Her Members, the winery owners, are so pleasant and she was impressed with how they—many of whose families had been in the business for four or five generations—so love what they plant, nurture, and produce.

The people she worked with at Wine Institute are some her closest friends: Bobby Koch, its president, Vikki Watkins, Susan Gregory, and Sheila Credle of the Washington office. She loves her former colleagues in the home office in San Francisco and those in Sacramento and in the states as well; all of them made every day a joy for Sally to go to work.

Currently there is no cure for ALS, but Sally decided early on not to be defeated. Despite the daily struggles, she has refused to give up in her fight. She finds strength in her husband Billy, who has been a stalwart help to her.

To us, Sally was the perfect embodiment of the wines she represented. Her presence brings life to any gathering of friends and fills every conversation with laughter.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to rise and celebrate the accomplishments of Sally Murphy and to offer her our prayers and support.

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN SYRIA:
CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I chaired a joint hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations and the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa. We turned our attention to an overlooked aspect of the crisis in Syria—the religious minorities caught in the middle of the conflict and apparently targeted by government forces as well as rebel groups.

More than 93,000 Syrians have been killed in this horrendous and seemingly endless civil war. More than 4.25 million people are displaced within Syria, with millions more fleeing to safety in the surrounding countries of Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, and Iraq. It is disturbing to note that one in five of the refugees is Christian although Christians in Syria make up one in ten of the pre-war population of 22 million people. This would seem to indicate that Christians are even more fearful for their lives and safety than other segments of the Syrian population.

Before the war, Syria was a fairly pluralistic society, with Alawites, Shias, Ismailis, Yezidis, Druze, Christians, Jews, and Sunnis living in relative peace, side by side. The situation was far from perfect, as President Bashar al Assad's regime had a vast security apparatus in place with members inside each of the religious communities to monitor their activities.

The Assad government was guilty of serious human rights violations, including the summary imprisonment and execution of political opponents. But relations between the various religious groups were generally not violent.

That civil co-existence has ended with the war. In February of this year, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reported that, "The conflict has become increasingly sectarian, with the conduct of the parties becoming significantly more radicalized and militarized."

This followed on an earlier Commission report stating that, "Entire communities are at risk of being forced out of the country or of being killed inside the country. With communities believing—not without cause—that they face an existential threat. . . ."

We know that early in the civil war, Assad came to view the Christian minority with suspicion, accusing churches of laundering money and goods for opposition forces and forbidding banks from transactions for certain churches.

There is also evidence that the Assad regime encouraged sectarian tensions in order to maintain power—perhaps believing that if the people were afraid of Islamists commandeering a nominally secular state, the people would be more likely to support Assad over the opposition.

In December 2012, Time Magazine reported allegations that the Assad regime was paying individuals to pose as opposition supporters and chant slogans at protests including "The Christians to Beirut, the Alawites to the grave."

Our own government has voiced concern about the particular threat posed to Christians

in Syria. According to the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2012, "The regime continued to frame opposition actions as targeting the Christian population. At the same time, it increased its own targeting of Christian and Alawi anti-regime activists in order to eliminate minority-voices that might counter its narrative of 'Sunni-Sponsored violence'."

Religious minorities seem to fear the opposition forces. Some prominent opposition groups (such as the Muslim Brotherhood) have a religious basis which has been seen as threatening to Syria's Alawite and Christian minorities.

Smaller opposition factions, such as the al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadist al-Nusra Front, take explicitly sectarian positions. There are reports of incidents in which rebel forces engaged in sectarian violence, such as burning Shi'ite mosques.

Christians are perceived by many in the opposition to be Assad loyalists, possibly due to Assad's aggressive recruitment of Christians into the regime militias at the start of the civil war. Other reports indicate that the Christians attempted to remain neutral either out of pacifism or concern about their rights under opposition forces.

Christian neutrality was perceived by some opposition groups as loyalty to the regime. In December 2012, a rebel force believed to be associated with the Muslim Brotherhood released a Youtube video entitled, "Warning mainly Christian cities in the province of Hama", and promising attacks if they continue to support and house the pro-Assad forces.

Christian leaders have been targeted, such as the April 2013 kidnapping of Mor Gregorius Yohanna Ibrahim of the Syriac Orthodox Church and Bishop Boulos Yazigi of the Greek Orthodox Church—both men still have not been returned.

The Druze community reports being targeted as well. In March 2013, a Druze leader reported to Christian Solidarity International, "Our people get stopped at checkpoints and are asked which sect they belong to. Once the militias hear that they are from Swaida [a province where 90% of the population is Druze], our men disappear."

The al-Nusra Front, a U.S. designated foreign terrorist organization, has been blamed for much of the sectarian rhetoric and violence, but dozens of the opposition groups ascribe to Islamist or Salafist-jihadist ideologies and mingle with the Free Syrian Army—which the U.S. may now be supporting.

Over the last three years, the United States has committed to providing \$250 million to various opposition groups in Syria—at least \$117 million of which has already been funded, largely to the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces. With the chemical weapon red line crossed, the Administration has also agreed to provide ammunition and small arms.

It is not clear whether any of this new lethal assistance will go to the Free Syrian Army and its worrisome opposition groups.

The Administration has also committed to send an additional \$300 million in humanitarian aid to "vulnerable groups" in and surrounding Syria. It is not clear whether distribution of this aid will be informed by the plight of religious minorities.

I am very concerned that the Administration may not be taking seriously the targeting of re-

ligious minorities. Too often, we have heard from this Administration that they have bigger issues to deal with than the vulnerability of religious minorities.

In the last two appropriations cycles, we have directed the Administration to condition aid to Egypt (\$1.3 billion dollars) on certification that Egypt is acting to protect the religious freedom of its minorities. The Administration (both Secretaries Clinton and Kerry) refused to do so. Perhaps not surprisingly, the government of Egypt continues to allow attacks on Coptic Christians with impunity.

Money talks. The United States should be using assistance to ensure recipient countries and entities have a plan that is implemented to protect vulnerable religious minorities. This is all the more critical in situations like Syria, where we are providing lethal aid in what has become sectarian tinderbox.

RECOGNIZING DR. MITCHELL T. MUNSON

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent of mine, Dr. Mitchell T. Munson, of Highlands Ranch, Colorado. Dr. Munson will soon be elected president of the American Optometric Association (AOA) during their 116th annual meeting, where he will be installed as the association's 91st president on Saturday, June 29, 2013, in San Diego, California.

Dr. Munson is a graduate of the Southern California College of Optometry and has a private practice in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. He has been a leader in his profession at the local, state, and national levels. The Colorado Optometric Association (COA) named him Young Optometrist of the Year in 1993 and he became president of the COA in 1995. Dr. Munson is a past president of the Southwest Council of Optometry and a Fellow in the American Academy of Optometry.

Dr. Munson has built a renowned record of service and leadership in his profession and I am confident that he will have a very successful term as president of the AOA. The sixth District of Colorado is proud to have Dr. Munson as a constituent and I join his family, friends, and colleagues in congratulating him on this achievement and wishing him the very best of luck.

ETHIOPIA AFTER MELES: THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, which I chair, held a hearing that examined the human rights and governance situation in Ethiopia, and the status of U.S. relations with Ethiopia. Given Ethiopia's important cooperation in opposing Is-

lamic militants in Somalia, as well as its cooperation in other counter-terrorism and peacekeeping efforts, the administration has been reluctant to seriously hold the Ethiopian government to account for persistent, egregious human rights violations, including the inability of the opposition political parties to function, restrictions on civil society organizations and journalists that prevent them from operating freely and forced removals of citizens from their lands.

According to the USAID's Assistant Administrator for Africa Earl Gast, "USAID believes that open channels of communication with the Ethiopian government create opportunities to influence democracy, rights, and governance issues." However, Amnesty International testified last week that "[s]ince 2005 the human rights situation in the country has deteriorated still further, with significantly increased restrictions placed on freedom of expression, association and other rights. Sadly the Ethiopian authorities have not acted in a vacuum during this period. The United States and others in the international community have failed to raise concerns over the government's systematic violation of human rights and flouting of its international obligations. The failure to speak out and press for change has emboldened the government and also allowed Ethiopia to set a dangerous example for other governments in the region to emulate. It is critical that the United States and other members of the international community press the Ethiopian authorities to address human rights concerns and repeal and reform key legislation and policies."

Amnesty International also noted in its testimony today that "[f]or Ethiopians held in detention, conditions continue to be extremely harsh. Torture is regularly reported to take place during interrogation in the initial stages of detention, often before the detainees have access to their families or to legal representatives. Prisoners have been slapped, suspended from the walls and ceiling by their wrists, beaten with various objects, denied sleep, electrocuted, and had weights suspended from their genitalia. Solitary confinement for extended periods is often reported. Within prison facilities, sanitation was often reported to be poor. Amnesty International has received reports of medical resources being withheld, and reports of deaths in custody. Food and water is often in short supply, and is supplemented by visiting family members where access is permitted."

Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country, after Nigeria, and the United States considers its government to be an important development and regional security partner. Ethiopia plays a key leadership role in the region, hosts the African Union (AU) headquarters, and is a major troop contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations.

According to the State Department, the three pillars of the bilateral relationship with Ethiopia are economic growth and development; democracy, governance, and human rights; and regional peace and security. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Karen Hanrahan stated in an October 2012 speech that "advancing democracy and human rights is one of our highest priorities in our engagement with Ethiopia." Nevertheless, it has been difficult to get cooperation from the current and previous administrations in confronting the