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The Honorable Jeff Miller of the First District of Florida
Washington, Wednesday, November 12, 2014

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JAY PEANUT FESTIVAL

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Jay Peanut Festival and recognize its founders, Gene and Brenda Gabbert and the community of Jay, Florida.

The Town of Jay, situated in northern Santa Rosa County, Florida near the Florida/Alabama line, is home to over 500 residents and the annual Jay Peanut Festival.

A quarter of a century ago, Gene and Brenda Gabbert founded the festival in honor of their daughter Melissa, who had lost her battle with cancer at the young age of 19. Melissa found great joy in frequenting agricultural festivals throughout the Gulf Coast and the special sense of community that festivals often bring to life. After her passing, the Gabberts started the Jay Peanut Festival to keep Melissa's memory alive and bring together the entire Northwest

Florida community in celebration of the area's deep agricultural history.

In the 25 years since, the festival has flourished. While the pig chase has remained a highlight, what began in 1990 as a one-day event with 30-40 vendors is now a two-day event with 230 booths, live entertainment, carnival rides, 5k run, and a parade. The staple of the festival—the peanut—may attract the tens of thousands of visitors from all over; however, to the Town of Jay, the festival is much more than that. It's also a celebration of community, that Melissa was so fond of, and its members who have helped carry on this proud tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to commemorate the 25-year history of the Jay Peanut Festival. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing the Gabberts and the Town of Jay all the best for continued success.