



## San Diego Zoo Global Celebrates 100 Years

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS  
OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 10th, 2016*

**Ms. DAVIS of California.** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in recognition of one of our nation's most iconic institutions as it celebrates its 100th anniversary. The San Diego Zoo is one of our city's most cherished landmarks, and has been consistently recognized among the world's top zoos. But it is much more than a zoo—it is an economic driver, it educates thousands of children and teachers, and it includes the largest zoo-based conservation research center in the world. It is a place where generations of families have come to appreciate and celebrate the great significance of our planet's most amazing creatures.

The San Diego Zoo was founded in 1916 by Dr. Harry M. Wegeforth, Dr. Paul Wegeforth, Dr. Fred Baker, Dr. Joseph C. Thompson, and naturalist Frank Stephens. It began as a sanctuary for animals abandoned after the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego, and it quickly became a home for exotic animals donated by private owners, purchased from circuses and other zoos, and recovered from challenging situations in the wild. It is now one of the largest and most important institutions in our city of San Diego and in the State of California.

Under current President and CEO Doug Myers' stewardship and vision, the San Diego Zoo has transformed into San Diego Zoo Global, an internationally acclaimed conservation organization. With the mission to "Save species worldwide by uniting our expertise in animal care and conservation science with our dedication to inspiring a passion for nature," this truly global organization aids recovery efforts around the world. San Diego Zoo Global's Institute for Conservation Research took the lead in saving the California condor by designing and implementing a successful captive-breeding program. Thanks to their tireless efforts, a species that was on the brink of extinction 25 years ago now has a population of over 420, with more than 200 living in the wild in California, Arizona, Utah, and Mexico.

San Diego Zoo Global is also investing in the future of conservation. Its Global Wildlife Biobank, which stores frozen viable cell cultures, tissue samples, and DNA of more than 10,000 individual animals representing 1,000 species, is perhaps the most important biological vault in the world. This invaluable resource will help San Diego Zoo Global in its mission to lead the fight against extinction, and researchers, universities, and scientific institutions around the world will use it for generations to come.

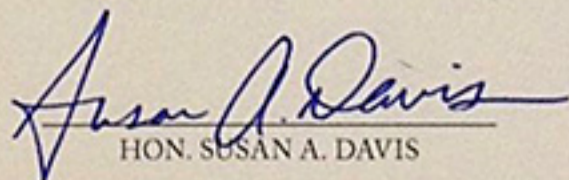
San Diego Zoo Global is not only a catalyst for wildlife conservation, it is an economic driver, attracting more than

five million visitors annually and employing our citizens in its parks and research facilities. In 2014, a San Diego Taxpayers Association research study reported that San Diego Zoo Global had an annual economic impact of \$1.2 billion—roughly the GDP of Australia. It is one of our city's largest and most stable private employers with 1,610 full-time employees, approximately a quarter of whom have been with the institution for more than 20 years.

In addition, San Diego Zoo Global is making an immediate and lasting impact in our nation's classrooms, producing educational materials for children and hosting hands-on conservation research workshops for middle and high school teachers from around the country. Educating and inspiring the next generation to be passionate about wildlife conservation is vital for long-term conservation efforts, and it all begins with one teacher inspiring one classroom.

David Attenborough once said, "People are not going to care about animal conservation unless they think that animals are worthwhile." San Diego Zoo Global and their tireless dedication to saving species has not only taught us all that animals are indeed worthwhile—they have set a new standard for zoological institutions worldwide to adopt and share their commitment to wildlife conservation. San Diego Zoo Global has educated generations to appreciate and understand that all creatures, from the African elephant to the kangaroo rat, are vitally important to life here on Earth—and that we all have a role to play in their care and conservation.

On behalf of San Diego's Congressional Delegation, I graciously commend San Diego Zoo Global on their 100th Anniversary, for being a beacon for our city of San Diego—driving our economy, educating our students, and bringing the world's animals into our lives, our classrooms, and our consciousness—and leading the fight to end extinction.

  
HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS