

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF  
CORTLAND JUNIOR SENIOR HIGH  
SCHOOL EIGHTH-GRADERS ON  
THEIR FIRST PLACE FINISH IN  
THE NASA SPACE SETTLEMENT  
CONTEST

**HON. RICHARD L. HANNA**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 10, 2012*

Mr. HANNA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Stephanie Passeri-Densmore's 8th grade English class at Cortland Junior Senior High School in Cortland, New York. Her class proudly won First Place in this year's NASA Space Settlement Contest.

The members of this year's First Place team include: Lead Officers: Captain Caitlyn Ruggiero and Co-captain Justin Gower; Officers: Clayton Larson, Connor Zinn, Macayla Kemp, Matt Plunkett, Molly Doubet, Madison Wasley; and Crew: Seamus Mulhern, Julia Marshall, Rebecca Alteri, Hannah Burkhard, Justin Cavanagh, Christopher Dovi, Bogdan Kalytyuk, Adam Klaes, Luke Lang, Erica Moran, Kelsey Neville, Jonathon Phillips, Audrey Porter, Tiffany Rogers, McKenzie Stark, Mya Velazquez, Curtis Wilk.

Mrs. Passeri-Densmore's 8th grade class began competing in the NASA Space Settlement Contest in March 1999 and every year since then they have placed among the top three finishers. The students create new entries every year.

The students choose their own small groups that tackle specific topics needed for the survival of an orbital space settlement. The groups communicate during the process to make sure the different sections coordinate smoothly when they are put together at the end. The students are able to choose the shape and location of the settlements. Most years, the students have chosen to put their settlement in the Lagrange 5 position between Earth and the moon or in orbit around Mars. It is an honor for me to celebrate the continued success of Mrs. Passeri-Densmore's students. Proudly, Mrs. Passeri-Densmore has several former students who chose careers in space-related professions or university programs because they became excited and interested after their participation in the NASA Space Settlement Contest.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in honoring of these students and this outstanding teacher, Mrs. Passeri-Densmore who is inspiring students to ask questions, to dream big, to open their minds and believe in themselves. Congratulations and keep up the good work.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 10, 2012*

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 9, 2012, I unfortunately missed a series of votes. If I had been here, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 452, "yea" on rollcall No. 453, and "yea" on rollcall No. 454.

HONORING DANIEL WAYNE  
WILLIAMS

**HON. JO ANN EMERSON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 10, 2012*

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Daniel Wayne Williams, a newly-naturalized American citizen and newly-adopted son of Brock and Ashley Williams. After three years of waiting, Brock and Ashley are bringing Daniel home with them from Russia. I am proud to offer them my deepest congratulations.

As a member of the House Adoption Caucus, these are the kinds of stories I love to share about the close-knit, loving American families who welcome adopted children into their homes in Southern Missouri from all over the nation and all over the world. I am reminded that it is our duty in this House of Representatives to promote their dreams of parenthood as well as the dreams of children to be adopted by parents who will make a warm and loving home for them.

Brock and Ashley have taken this journey together to find their son. Daniel has received a tremendous gift from them, and he is providing an even greater gift to them. Many have been able to follow their story through their blog, the Gorby Project—a step-by-step account of the adoption process which began in 2010. It serves as a reminder that adoption is rarely a short or easy process and that we have a duty to be supportive of these aspiring parents as well as the children who bring them such joy.

Thank you to the Williams family for sharing their experience with us, for promoting adoption, for persevering to bring their family together, and for demonstrating the great love that binds parents to their children—even when those children come to them from far away over the course of many years.

IN HONOR OF SSGT MARCUS  
"MARK" BURLERSON AND HIS  
FAMILY

**HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 10, 2012*

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero from my district in Odessa, Texas, SSGT Marcus "Mark" Burlerson of the 2nd/EOD Company, The United States Marine Corps. On December 9, 2011, while serving in Afghanistan, SSGT Burlerson was disarming a second IED, when a third one nearby exploded, almost taking his life. He lost one arm and the complete use of another. He lost one eye and vision in his other, and suffered numerous other severe injuries. In much pain, SSGT Burlerson continues to recover with the help of his wife, Sara; his sons Marcus and Issac; and his daughter, Ariel. Families and heroes like these are the heart of Texas and the backbone of America. I ask that this poem, The Heart of Texas, penned in their honor by Albert Caswell, be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE HEART OF TEXAS

The. . .

The Heart of Texas. . .

Out in The West. . .

In Texas,

where men grow tall who can so pass that test!

Men like Houston and Austin,  
who were but of our nation's very best!

For from her Heart,  
now comes such a man no less,  
who so answered that most noble call when  
he was so asked!

Who all for our freedom so faced death!  
That Call to Arms!

That Call to Fight,  
as did this young man to do what was right!  
To so march off to war,  
so boldly there all in uniform!

All out into the darkest of all nights!  
For from out of her heart so came,  
you Mark. . . one of her most magnificent of  
all sights!

Because, In Texas they grow em tall!  
And Heroes too,  
somehow they just don't believe in small!  
All in this United States Marine,  
the one who so answered that most noble and  
proudly worn those shades of green!

SSGT Burlerson,  
all in you. . . and what we saw!

Was but,  
The Heart of Texas who but gave his all!  
All in your most magnificent shades of  
green!

Because, you Mark. . .  
so grew up to be one of the finest of all  
things that one could be!

As you so grew up to be A United States Marine!

Because, all in you. . . The Very Heart of  
Texas can so be seen!

As the eyes of Texas are upon you Mark,  
and they so like what they have seen!

All in your fine life of Strength In Honor,  
and what it all so means!

While, against all odds. . .  
somehow almost like a God, you'd so con-  
vene!

And not give up you United States Marine!  
For you had one of the toughest jobs of that  
war!

Where, each new step, EOD. . .  
but so means death for sure!  
For only a man of such character and faith,  
could such fear so ignore!

As there you were on that day,  
when your fine life almost when away!

As an explosion took your arms,  
and eye and so ravaged your body all in  
every way!

As it was all in that moment when you so  
had a choice. . .

When, your heart as big as Texas so said lis-  
ten to that inner voice!

And don't give up,  
as all of your Brothers In Arms for you  
began to pray!

As somehow, someday you Mark have so  
come back from that day!

Oooh. . .rah. . . Jar Head,  
as your Heart of Texas has so led the way!

To so help you to so leave behind,  
all of that pain and heartache that which  
comes to you on each day. . .

To So Move On, To So March Off. . . To Our  
World To So Bless!

Because, nothing is getting in this Marine's  
way! As You So Teach Us!

As You So Beseech Us!

As You So Reach Us!

All in what your fine heart conveys!

For you are More Than Just A Man Mark,  
you are one of Texas's very best!

Teaching us all,  
what that word hero so means no less!

They say everything is bigger in Texas,  
and maybe Hearts and Heroes too so yes!

And if I ever have a son,