

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### TRIBUTE TO FRANCISCO IGNACIO FREDRICKSON

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Nativity Catholic School Third Grade Class, and the entire Nativity Community, to pay tribute to Francisco Ignacio Fredrickson. Francisco was born on November 27, 2015, and passed away at the age of nine on December 5, 2024, in the loving arms of his parents. The Nativity Parish, Catholic School and especially Ms. Fetzer's third grade class will miss his ever-smiling face and positive attitude.

In June of 2023 Francisco was diagnosed with DIPG, an aggressive form of childhood brain cancer that is terminal. The doctors gave him nine months to live, and yet Francisco persevered and lived 18 months. DIPG is especially devastating because the cancer is located on the brain stem which makes it inoperable and while it leaves their cognitive skills intact, it slowly takes away a person's motor skills. This leaves patients unable to walk, talk, move, and eventually unable to eat, drink or breathe, all while their minds are fully aware of what is happening to their bodies. While DIPG is rare—only 150 to 300 diagnosis per year—it is devastating for the children and their families.

However, much like Francisco, I do not want to focus on the illness but on a life lived well. Francisco loved everything to do with space and NASA. He was able to visit Kennedy Space Center and watch a launch at Cape Canaveral in Florida in the fall of 2023. Francisco was a boy of deep faith and was fond of joking with Nativity Catholic School's Priests, Monsignor Bob Cilinski, Father Bresnahan, and Father Bennett. He also loved a good party and often hosted wonderful gatherings at his grandparent's house where he and his friends could run and play. Francisco is survived by his mother and father, Laura and Ryan; his sister Mariana; his twin brothers, Gabriel and Mateo; his grandparents, John and Carole Fredrickson, Teresa Hernandez and Wilfredo Lizarzaburu; as well as his aunts and uncles, Carlos Lizarzaburu, Diana Lopez, and Brenna and Jamie Fredrickson.

In the words of his mother, "We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Francisco is now where he so intensely longed to be: at Home with Jesus. Now that his body rests, his soul is free. And with that freedom he is doing all the things he was so looking forward to doing . . . Playing soccer, playing piano ("with both hands, like a pro!"), partying it up with the Saints, and finally making those Nutella pancakes that he said he'd make for Jesus as soon as he got to Heaven. Many hearts are grieving our boy's death, ours included. But know as well, how elated we are. Francisco didn't get to marry the love of his

life, or to have children, or do any of those big life milestones . . . But that's because he was meant to skip all those and go straight to the absolute biggest milestone there will ever be: to go straight to Jesus, to hug him, to sit next to him, and to crack him up with his absolutely silly, lovable nature."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the life of Francisco Ignacio Fredrickson and in sending his family our sincere condolences. Though Francisco only lived nine short years, he brought a lifetime of joy to his family, friends and school community. The light and love he brought to the world remains and is carried forth in the hearts of many.

### HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF FRED AIKENS

#### HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Frederick Aikens, a dedicated public servant and Chief of Staff to Senate Minority Leader Dan Blue, for his outstanding leadership and service to the people of North Carolina.

Fred Aikens has spent over three decades serving our state with distinction, from his early work as a fiscal analyst in the General Assembly to his role at the North Carolina Department of Transportation, where he served as Deputy Secretary and Acting Commissioner of the Division of Motor Vehicles.

As Chief of Staff, Fred Aikens has been a crucial leader, helping Senator Blue guide the Democratic caucus through some of the most challenging legislative sessions in our state's history.

A native of Wilmington, Fred's long career in public service is marked by his strategic vision and his ability to navigate complex challenges with integrity.

In addition to his contributions to the public sector, Fred Aikens has served our country as a Lt. Colonel in the North Carolina Army National Guard. His commitment to public service, whether in state government or in uniform, has been nothing short of exemplary.

Today, I commend Fred Aikens for his remarkable career and thank him for his enduring service to the people of North Carolina. His leadership, wisdom, and dedication have made our state stronger, and we are grateful for all he has done.

### RECOGNIZING ANTHONY BARONE—EAGLE SCOUT

#### HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today, I celebrate Anthony Barone for reaching the cov-

eted rank of Eagle Scout after many outstanding years of achievement. Anthony's journey began six years ago, a testament to his unwavering dedication to the Boy Scouts. He earned his way through each of the respected positions, demonstrating his commitment and earning 21 merit badges in the areas of citizenship, personal fitness, and family life. While working on his photography merit badge, he discovered a passion for photography—a hobby which has only added to his well-roundedness. Anthony's love for the community shone through as he acquired over 250 volunteer hours, feeding people experiencing homelessness, and mentoring the younger Cub Scouts in town. For his Eagle Scout project, he honored our men and women in uniform by installing six flagpoles to the town Veteran Memorial, to house each of America's branches of service, complete with a granite marker to honor our troops. Anthony is currently a senior at Kingsway Regional High School in the Woolwich Township of South Jersey, where he is taking three college-level courses, which led to his induction into the National Honor Society. He has many plans for his future and greatly enjoys public speaking and speechwriting. He plans to utilize these skills by writing a book that will inspire others to follow in his footsteps. First, he plans to attend Rowan University and pursue a degree in Business Administration. I have complete faith that whatever Anthony puts his mind to, he will accomplish, and I look forward to seeing the great things he will achieve in the future. God Bless Anthony and God Bless our United States of America.

### RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF CHAIRMAN JEFFREY BOHM

#### HON. LISA C. MCCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize St. Clair County Commissioner Jeffrey "Jeff" Bohm, who will be chairing his last Board of Commissioners meeting this evening.

Throughout Jeff's career as a county commissioner, Jeff has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to his community. Thanks largely to his leadership, St. Clair County has remained a great place to live and raise a family.

Jeff has been known by many to start conversations and "brag" about St. Clair County—and rightfully so. Jeff has a passion for learning, is known to bring people together, and will always take time to listen. These are values reflective of any good leader.

Jeff has always put his community first. After his service, I am confident that he will continue to inspire and serve his neighbors—even without a title.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Chairman Bohm for over 20 years of service to his community. I am proud to

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

represent Jeff in Congress, and I wish him, his wife Carrie, and their two daughters, Jessica and Christina, the best of luck in the years to come.

**RECOGNIZING DEVIN SCILLIAN'S SERVICE TO THE NATION AND HIS COMMUNITY**

**HON. DEBBIE DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Devin Scillian of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, on the occasion of his retirement from WDIV Local 4 News in Detroit. As a local news anchor, his steady presence and informative programs have been a stalwart part of life in Southeastern Michigan for the last twenty-eight years, and his service to his community is worthy of commendation.

Devin was born in Kansas in 1963 to Billie Hugh and Betti Jo Scillian. His late father earned four bronze stars and a Meritorious Service Medal over two tours in Vietnam. His mother, a writer with a history in community theater, he credits with being his creative spark. Devin started dating his wife, Corey, while they were in high school after his family moved off base at Fort Riley, Kansas.

After graduating from the School of Journalism at the University of Kansas in 1985, Devin began his career in local news at WIBW in Topeka, Kansas. This was followed by stops at WAND in Decatur, Illinois, KLTW in Tyler, Texas, and KFOR in Oklahoma City. It was at KFOR in 1995 where his coverage of the bombing at the Murrah Federal Building helped the station win a Peabody Award.

Devin joined WDIV in Detroit in 1995 as a reporter before moving to the anchor position in 1996. In this position he has traveled the world, including stops in Beijing, the Vatican, Jerusalem, and Moscow. He has covered six Olympiads and has three times won the Edward R. Murrow Award for excellence in broadcast journalism. His weekly program, Flashpoint, has become almost mandatory viewing for those who wish to be in the know for the most pressing issues in Southeastern Michigan. He has used his position to champion charities, whether that is hosting a dinner for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, collecting shoes for Lace Up Detroit, or recording a song for "A Michigan Christmas of Hope"—a compilation of Christmas songs brought to you by some of Detroit & Michigan's Best artists and bands to benefit Holy Cross Children's Services.

Outside of his career in local news, Devin is also an accomplished musician. He won the Detroit Music Award for Best Country Vocalist in 2018 and Best Country Performer in 2001. He and his band "Arizona Son" have opened for artists such as Toby Keith, Reba McEntire, and LeAnn Rimes. He is also the author of 22 children's books, including S is For Sunflower, which won the Bill Martin, Jr. Picture Book Award in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Devin Scillian for the lifetime of dedication to his community. From Kansas to Michigan, his consistent and reliable reporting has a boon for the community which he is serving. Though we are sad to

see him leave, he is certainly going to continue to be a presence in our lives through his music and his writing. We thank him for his service and wish him all the happiness as he starts this next chapter in his life. I thank Devin.

**HONORING MARK ROOT'S SERVICE TO ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, INDIANA**

**HON. RUDY YAKYM III**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate my friend and devoted public servant Mark Root as he prepares to step down from the St. Joseph County Council after nearly two decades of service in elected office.

As Councilman, Mark's commitment to meeting the needs of St. Joseph County Hoosiers has been deep and unwavering. Quite simply, Mark is the kind of person that you want in your corner as well as serving in government and making decisions that affect peoples' lives.

Mark's leadership abilities have brought important projects and investments to St. Joseph's County over the course of his twenty years serving on the Council, and he has helped keep St. Joseph County on the move through both good economic times and bad. Mark's focus has always been on making his home county an even better place to live, work, and raise a family, something he has done through bringing to bear his expertise on fiscal and budgetary matters, and his commitment to being a responsible steward of tax-payers' dollars.

Through his time on the Council, Mark has developed a well-deserved reputation for being a thoughtful leader who is easy to work with. Regardless of their political beliefs, so many people have testified to Mark's good nature, his personal loyalty, and his Hoosier common sense.

In addition to his service to the people of St. Joseph County in elected office, Mark has also been a mentor to me and a close personal friend. In fact, Mark is the one who taught me how to comb through election results on a precinct-by-precinct basis, a lesson that has been invaluable to me in my political career.

As Mark's time and career in public service comes to a close, I have absolutely no doubt that St. Joseph County and our communities are better off thanks to this good man with a servant's heart. I also know that Mark's wife Sara and his whole family are very proud of him, a sentiment I share wholeheartedly.

I join Hoosiers throughout St. Joseph County and Indiana's Second Congressional District in expressing our gratitude to Mark Root for his service and in wishing him a very happy retirement and all the best going forward.

**RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF MARY L. ADAMS**

**HON. JIMMY PANETTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the extraordinary career and service of

Mary L. Adams, who has tirelessly dedicated herself to the people of Monterey County. Today, at her last meeting of the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council, and upon her well-earned retirement, it is fitting to honor her leadership and enduring contributions to our community.

Mary L. Adams has served with distinction as the Fifth District Supervisor for the County of Monterey, skillfully navigating numerous complex challenges with compassion and foresight. Her accomplishments exemplify a lifetime of hard work and community dedication.

Mary played a vital role in leading Monterey County through major emergencies, including multiple atmospheric river events and wildfires such as the Soberanes, River, Carmel, Dolan, and Palo Colorado fires. Her leadership in organizing efforts, like the Big Sur Helicopter Commodity Drop, provided critical support to isolated communities, ensuring the safety and resilience of residents during these crises.

She has been instrumental in addressing key local challenges, including coordination during the Pfeiffer Bridge repairs, implementing safety measures along Highway 1 near Point Lobos State Park and the Bixby Creek Bridge, and overseeing the Scenic Road Carmel Lagoon Environmental Impact Report. Each of these efforts has significantly contributed to the preservation of Monterey County's natural beauty and infrastructure.

Mary's leadership in infrastructure improvements has also been transformative. She spearheaded upgrades to Carmel Valley Road and played a key role as Chair of the Carmel Valley Road Advisory Committee, culminating in the finalization of the Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade Roundabout project.

A steadfast advocate for housing solutions, Mary worked tirelessly to update the Vacation Rental Ordinance, protect neighborhood character, and champion sustainable, long-term housing initiatives. Under her leadership, the County invested in the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership Housing Trust Fund, unlocking millions in funding for affordable housing projects. She also supported innovative public-private partnerships and employer-sponsored housing initiatives, while prioritizing the community's best interests in updating the Housing Element.

During the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mary provided steady and compassionate leadership, ensuring critical resources reached those in need. Her advocacy extended to sustainable water solutions, supporting the passage of Measure J for public water ownership and hosting Regional Water Forums to engage the community on pressing water challenges.

Throughout her tenure, Mary has exemplified transparency and accountability in governance. Her instrumental role in the hiring of key county officials, including the County Administrative Officer and County Counsel, has strengthened the foundation for Monterey County's future success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the career and accomplishments of Mary L. Adams. Her legacy of leadership and dedication to the people of Monterey County will inspire generations to come. We thank her for her service and wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement.

HONORING CIVIL SOCIETY AND  
IL-03 STAFF

## HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, as we get close to the end of the 118th Congress, my first term representing the greatly diverse Illinois Third Congressional District, I rise in full gratitude for all of those who have supported me and held me during these not-so-easy two years in what we call the People's House.

And we've heard that it takes a village to represent, to fight, and to deliver for our communities.

But recently, 219 members of this body opted to persecute the village, passing a bill that puts all of civil society at risk.

They took that action at the precise moment we should be uplifting and celebrating civil society as the first and most resilient line of defense for many vulnerable communities.

Without a robust civil society, countries can descend into instability, their governments becoming prone to authoritarianism, human rights abuses, and the erosion of democratic freedoms.

So, while some of my colleagues came to the floor to do harm to civil society, I have come to the floor to commend the countless nonprofit organizations, faith communities, schools and universities, advocacy groups, and cultural institutions that compose the powerful civil society of Illinois' 3rd Congressional District.

Since my time as the executive director of a nonprofit in Chicago, I have seen community organizations nurture and sustain a healthy democracy by providing life-saving services including housing and warm meals—while holding those in power accountable.

It is clear that strengthening, repairing, and defending our democracy is not solely the work of government. It requires the fabric of our communities, civil society organizations, weaving their work together on the frontlines to protect, defend, and enrich our communities and our neighborhoods.

So today, I am grateful for faith communities like the member institutions of the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance and DuPage United; for community organizations like Onward Neighborhood House, La Casa Norte, and Habitat for Humanity DuPage; for schools and universities like Northeastern University El Centro and North Park University; for early childhood centers like EduCare DuPage and Chicago Commons; for human rights advocates like Palenque LSNA and AFIRE; for cultural organizations like the National Veterans Art Museum and the Mexican Cultural Center of DuPage.

There are too many strong civil society organizations to name. I thank the many, many civil service organizations across IL-03. Gracias.

I appreciate the opportunities and possibilities they create for our neighbors—Independent of their zip code, citizenship status, or past actions—and the way they keep me rooted in a community ready to fight like hell for our neighbors.

As I celebrate the work of our civil society, I also want to uplift the team that puts in the long hours; that makes so many sacrifices for

the people of IL-03; and who is seldomly mentioned, seldomly seen in public. And that is my staff.

My staff, who despite the challenges of this Congress and despite a Congress that often-times negates the humanity of their own family, has used their professional and lived experiences to introduce and champion transformative and progressive legislation, has pushed the government to work for our constituents and deliver resources back to Illinois Third, and has ensured our neighbors receive the lifesaving services that they deserve.

I thank my entire team: Ellen Meredith Ray, Luis Miguel Carrizales Castillo, Claudia Dolores Peralta, Karsen Patrick Bailey, Deepa Pinakin Patel, Noemi Avelar, Jowen Halber Ortiz Cintrón, Marina Kristine Sangit, Daniela A. Guerrero Diaz, Valeria Nicolle Metzgen Castro, Katherine Gitsel Carranza Bahena, Jennifer Ho, Nataly Miranda-Castañeda, Vianey Luna Lopez, Micaela Unzueta, Magda Karina Herron, Levi Casmir Iseminger Todd, and Rogelio Elizondo-Juarez, as well as the countless interns, fellows, and past staffers who have supported our work.

I thank them for their time, energy, emotion, and passion they pour into our fight for working people.

They are seen. They are appreciated. I am so proud of the work we have begun together in this term and will continue in the next.

Through gratitude, I find hope.

Because both the community at home and the team I have here in Congress have reminded me that in uncertain times, one thing is certain—our communities are prepared to organize, to protect each other, and to unite no matter what the next four years bring us. I am forever grateful. And I am ready.

## RECOGNIZING THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF ANTHONY J. MAIELLO

## HON. GERALD E. CONNOLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Anthony J. Maiello.

Anthony Maiello received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Education from Ithaca College in 1965 and 1967. He then went on to the Crane School of Music, Potsdam College of SUNY, Potsdam, New York where he served as a Professor of Music and Chairman of Performance. He spent 20 years at the Crane School, and taught Advanced Instrumental Conducting, Applied Clarinet, Woodwind Techniques, Percussion Techniques and conducted the Crane Wind Ensemble.

In 1986, Maiello joined the faculty at George Mason University (GMU) as a Professor of Music. He taught applied lessons in Conducting, Aural Skills, and classes in Instrumental Conducting. From 1996 to 2009, he conducted the Mason Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. Under his direction, the ensembles commissioned new works, made numerous recordings, and appeared at national and international conferences. In 2007, Maiello was awarded the title of "University Professor" by the GMU Board of Visitors, the highest rank given to Mason faculty members.

Anthony Maiello also has made professional appearances both nationally and abroad conducting music festivals, adjudicating ensembles, and presenting clinics, lectures, and workshops throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Bahamas, and Europe. He conducted musical activities for the Gold Medal Ceremonies at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York; served as Musical Director for Music Festivals International; was selected as President of the International Association of Jazz Educators—New York State Chapter; and is a guest clinician for Yamaha Corporation and Warner Bros. Publications. In March of 2010, he was inducted into the Bands of America Hall of Fame at Music for All's Indianapolis headquarters.

Throughout his career, Maiello accumulated an impressive list of recording credits. This includes conducting the American Wind Symphony and additional studio ensembles for Alfred/Belwin Publications. Locally, Maiello has served as Associate Conductor of The McLean Orchestra, was appointed an Honorary Conductor of the United States Navy Band, and was a participant in the National Conducting Institute with Leonard Slatkin and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

In addition to his service in music and education, Maiello is a volunteer police officer for Fairfax County and is very involved with his church. He has been administering the Eucharist on Sundays for decades, and since retiring, he plans to administer the Eucharist during the week to the sick at their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Anthony J. Maiello on an incredible career. He has been able to impact countless lives and help shape the futures of his students over the past 60 years. Best wishes for a happy and safe retirement, filled with time with his loving wife, Susan Maiello, and his daughters Carol and Nancy. I ask that my colleagues join me in applauding this inspired and dedicated educator, conductor, and mentor.

## CELEBRATING BANGLADESH VICTORY DAY

## HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, today we join the people of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi communities around the world in celebrating Victory Day on December 16, 2024. It acknowledges a day of triumph, remembrance, and persistence through the courage and unity of the Bangladeshi people.

As we honor this significant moment in history, we must remember the sacrifices made by the patriotic individuals who fought for freedom, peace, and justice. Victory Day serves not only as a celebration but as a demonstration of the steep costs of liberty. This inspiring commemoration exemplifies the values of democracy, human rights, and self-determination.

In a short period of time, Bangladesh has shown power of determination and innovation. On December 16, 1971, after a 9-months-long liberation war, Bangladesh claimed victory. With a skilled workforce, technological advancement, strong healthcare, and a vibrant

youth population, Bangladesh is emerging as a leader, building on its rich history. With more transformative innovation, the country is developing adaptation strategies to combat the climate crisis with leadership in protecting the environment and strengthening its climate resilience.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating Bangladesh Victory Day as we acknowledge and celebrate the sacrifices made by countless brave souls and citizens who fought for a future of justice and sovereignty. Let us also take this moment to recognize the vibrant Bangladeshi-American community throughout our country. Their dedication to cultural contributions enriches our Nation, and we are all the better for it.

**RECOGNIZING REVEREND KEVIN MOUANOUTOUA**

**HON. VINCE FONG**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the pastoral life of Reverend Kevin Mouanoutoua of the Lao Evangelical Church of Fresno.

Reverend Kevin dedicated his life to serving the Central Valley of California, serving as Pastor of the Lao Evangelical Churches of Tulare, Porterville, and Fresno, where he taught about God's love and grace to many faithful congregations. He also spent decades as a social worker for the Fresno County Department of Social Services' Child Protective Services. Reverend Kevin has served as a strong leader to his congregations and someone who represents the compassion of Christ in both his words and actions.

On behalf of my constituents in the Central Valley of California, I would like to congratulate Reverend Kevin Mouanoutoua on his decades of devoted service to faith and to others. As he enters this exciting new chapter in his life, I thank him for his many contributions to our community.

**CELEBRATING WILLIAMSON COUNTY EMS DIRECTOR MIKE KNIPSTEIN**

**HON. JOHN R. CARTER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to recognize Williamson County EMS Director Mike Knipstein for his exemplary 30-year career of service to residents. A career of such longevity and impact is truly commendable and deserving of recognition. Throughout his tenure, Director Knipstein has demonstrated unwavering dedication to public safety and healthcare, leaving a lasting legacy of excellence and compassionate service to the community.

Mike began his career as a paramedic in 1994 and has earned the Williamson County EMS Paramedic of the Year award twice for his exceptional care. Following his promotion to Lieutenant, he pioneered the creation of a medical continuing education program that re-

mains instrumental in training medics and first responders today.

From 2003 to 2014, as a Commander, Mike shaped the department's future through professional development initiatives, infection control management, and strategic growth planning. As Division Commander of EMS Operations, he introduced budgetary tracking measures that improved overtime cost management.

In 2015, Mike became Deputy Director, leading Williamson County EMS to achieve and maintain accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services, the EMS industry's "gold standard." Since 2016, as Director, he has enhanced services by securing stable funding for the Community Health Paramedic Program, implementing innovative safety policies, and ensuring resource readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director Knipstein's leadership has profoundly elevated EMS services and improved countless lives in Williamson County. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I extend my deepest gratitude for his remarkable service and wish him continued success.

**HONORING THE LIFE OF FORMER PENNSYLVANIA STATE REPRESENTATIVE ISABELLA V. FITZGERALD**

**HON. DWIGHT EVANS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of Former Pennsylvania State Representative Isabella V. Fitzgerald, a beloved leader, trailblazer, and pillar of the Northwest Philadelphia community. Affectionately known as "Izzy," Representative Fitzgerald departed this earthly life peacefully on December 6, 2024, leaving a legacy of service, compassion, and transformative impact.

In 2017, Representative Fitzgerald made history as the first African American woman elected to serve as State Representative for the 203rd Legislative District, a role she held with distinction for three terms. During her tenure, she championed many issues, including public safety, small business development, community revitalization, and healthcare access. Her dedication to her community is exemplified by her efforts to modernize public spaces, her creation of the Community Angel Awards to honor unsung heroes, and her revival of Super Saturday, a celebration of Northwest Philadelphia neighborhoods.

Representative Fitzgerald's legislative accomplishments included sponsoring House Bill 579, which improved insurance coverage for breast imaging and was signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf in 2020. Her advocacy for affordable housing, health care, and education reflected her deep commitment to addressing the challenges faced by families in her community. A staunch supporter of public engagement, she fostered partnerships with local law enforcement and organized events such as National Night Out to promote community safety.

Even in retirement, Representative Fitzgerald's dedication to her neighbors and

community never waned. She continued to organize grassroots efforts, advocate for breast cancer awareness, and provide mentorship to countless individuals.

Beyond her professional achievements, Isabella Fitzgerald was a devoted mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend.

In recognition of her incredible contributions, the intersection of Stenton Avenue and Washington Lane in Philadelphia was renamed "Isabella Fitzgerald Way" on December 15, 2024—a fitting tribute to a woman who dedicated her life to uplifting her community.

**HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF PHIL BADDOUR**

**HON. WILEY NICKEL**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Phil Baddour, a distinguished North Carolinian whose career has been defined by a commitment to public service, advocacy, and leadership.

Phil Baddour served in the North Carolina House of Representatives from 1993 to 2002, representing the 11th district with integrity and dedication. As House Democratic Leader for two terms, he was a key voice in shaping policy that benefited working families across our state. His leadership extended beyond the General Assembly, as he chaired the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, working tirelessly to preserve North Carolina's natural resources for future generations.

A lifelong resident of Goldsboro, Phil has spent more than fifty years practicing law in his hometown, advocating for justice and fairness. His contributions to the legal profession are profound, having served as President of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice, one of our state's leading groups of attorneys. His dedication to public service is reflected in his leadership roles with the North Carolina Economic Development Board, the Board of Transportation, and the Commission for the Future of the Courts in North Carolina.

Beyond his work in the legal and public policy arenas, Phil Baddour has also served his country. He retired as a Colonel in the North Carolina National Guard, where he provided distinguished leadership as Staff Judge Advocate.

Please join me in recognizing Phil Baddour for his lifetime of service, his commitment to justice, and his profound contributions to the people of North Carolina.

**HONORING LEROY SOMMER**

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize and commend Mr. Leroy Sommer, the Airport Manager of College Park Airport in College Park, Maryland, on his retirement after a decade of exemplary service to the aviation community.

For the past ten years, Mr. Sommer has led one of our Nation's most historic airports with

remarkable dedication and skill. College Park Airport, known as the world's oldest continuously operating airport, is a cornerstone of aviation history and a symbol of the ingenuity and perseverance of the early pioneers of flight. Under Mr. Sommer's capable leadership, the airport has continued to thrive, serving as both a vital resource for general aviation and a living monument to our Nation's rich aviation heritage.

Mr. Sommer's unwavering commitment to safety, operational excellence, and community engagement has been instrumental in the airport's success. His tireless efforts have ensured that College Park Airport remains a beacon for aviation enthusiasts and a trusted partner to the local community.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Sommer has built strong relationships with residents, businesses, government agencies, and the aviation industry. These partnerships reflect his exceptional leadership and his dedication to fostering collaboration and trust—qualities that are vital to maintaining the strength and vitality of our Nation's aviation infrastructure.

As Mr. Sommer transitions into this well-deserved next chapter, we honor his significant contributions to aviation and to College Park Airport's enduring legacy. His stewardship of this historic landmark has preserved its place in history while ensuring its relevance for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Leroy Sommer for his service and in wishing him all the best in his retirement. His legacy will be felt for years to come, and he will always have a place among the great stewards of aviation history.

**RECOGNIZING THE COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES CROSS COUNTRY TEAM**

**HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Colorado School of Mines Men's Cross Country Team for winning their fourth NCAA Division II National Championship.

Over the past ten years, the Orediggers have dominated Division II Athletics. This season, they won the team title in every race and six out of seven runners earned All-American honors. The championship race was especially impressive, with three runners finishing in the top ten. This team, made up of Logan Bocovich, Loic Scomparin, Ethan Grolnic, Paul Knight, Dawson Gunn, Jeremiah Vaille, and Max Bonenger, showed the very best in competitiveness that the Colorado School of Mines Athletic Department has to offer.

This achievement was earned by the commitment of the runners, support from students, guidance from Athletic Director David Hansburg, and the coaching of Chris Siemers. Their Division II championship title, cements Colorado School of Mines's reputation as an academic and athletic powerhouse in Colorado and across the country.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate the Orediggers on their successful season.

**RECOGNIZING DICK LUNDY'S SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY**

**HON. DEBBIE DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dick Lundy, a resident of Dexter, Michigan, who is retiring after 45 years on the Dexter School Board. His decades of service to his community and its children are worthy of commendation.

Dick earned a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Michigan and started his own business, Control-O-Matic, later COM Inc., in 1972. He served as its President and CEO until it was sold in 1999.

Dick was first elected to the Dexter School Board in 1979, the first of eleven elections that he would win. He also spent 40 years as Treasurer and another four as Vice President. During his time on the board, he has seen a plethora of changes, from Michigan's shift to per-student state funding in 1994 or the introduction of computers and every new technology since. This also includes the successful passage of half a dozen school bonds, the construction of multiple new buildings and development of the school campus, and the hiring of seven superintendents and two interim superintendents, in addition to the vast financial oversight of the district. Both of his children as well as three grand-children have graduated from Dexter Schools, and two great-grandchildren are currently enrolled.

Outside of his time on the Dexter School Board, Dick has served on the board of many local nonprofits, including the Washtenaw United Way, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, the Dexter United Methodist Church, and Emergent Health Partners. In addition, Dick has served on the Dexter Downtown Development Authority and the Local Development Finance Authority which created the Dexter Business and Research Park. He also worked with the nonprofit Michigan From the Heart, where he's assisted in connecting University of Michigan student athletes with patients at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating Dick Lundy and his 45 years of service to the Dexter community. The future of Dexter is much brighter because of Dick's hard work. We wish him the best in retirement and thank him for all he has done.

**CELEBRATING JOHNNY 5 V2.0'S ACHIEVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ROBOTICS COMPETITIONS**

**HON. BILL FOSTER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sawyer Rinn and Tristan Souza, of Johnny 5 v2.0, a robotics team from the 11th District of Illinois, on their recent achievements in representing the United States at two international competitions.

In November, Sawyer and Tristan earned 5th place at the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) International Finals, competing against 100

teams from 90 countries. Their success was the result of their exceptional engineering, problem-solving, and innovation skills, which enabled them to design and program a robot capable of completing complex tasks. Additionally, in October, the team placed 1st at the World Robotics Olympiad Americas Open in Puerto Rico, where they competed against 25 teams from 17 countries.

Coach William Wong of Naperville leads the team. He is the founder of Chasewood Learning, which has produced multiple national robotics champions. His programs inspire children to develop STEM skills and pursue related careers. Sawyer Rinn, 12, from Geneva, Illinois, in his third year of robotics, won the 2022 WRO National Championship and placed 27th at the WRO International Finals. Tristan Souza, 12, from Hinsdale, Illinois, in his second year, reached the FIRST LEGO League state finals in 2022. Both aspire to study engineering at top universities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have outstanding students and mentors in my district who drive innovation and promote STEM career pathways. Please join me in congratulating Sawyer Rinn, Tristan Souza, and Coach William Wong on their impressive achievements.

**RECOGNIZING THE 2024 WASHINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS**

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) and to congratulate the recipients of the 27th Annual Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence for Impaired Driving Prevention.

Founded in 1982, WRAP is an award-winning, public-private coalition formed to fight drunk driving, drugged driving, and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. Through educational and innovative public outreach programs, WRAP is credited with keeping local alcohol-related death rates consistently below the national average. Its programs educate students and the general public on the dangers of alcohol and drugs, particularly driving while under the influence. Through the WRAP Holiday SoberRide program, individuals who are impaired can request a free cab ride home. Since SoberRide was launched in 1991, over 80,000 safe rides have been provided in the Washington Metropolitan area, preventing potential accidents and deaths.

Since 1997, WRAP has sponsored an annual Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony to honor local law enforcement professionals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the fight against drunk driving. It is my honor to include in the RECORD the names of the 2024 Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence for Impaired Driving Prevention recipients:

City of Falls Church Police Department: Sergeant Matthew Parker and Private First Class Matthew Guiniga

Maryland State Police: Trooper First Class Logan Speak

Town of Herndon Police Department: Private First Class Neil Simpson

Prince William County Police Department: Officer Godson Vondee

Loudoun County Sheriffs Office: Deputy First Class Samuel Zinkgraf

Arlington County Police Department: Corporal Kellsey Costello-Mays

Alexandria Police Department: Officer Whitney Watts-Cerrato

Metropolitan Police Department: Officer Hakim Bouaichi

Virginia State Police: Trooper Collin Kashmer

United States Park Police: Officer Christian Callahan

Fairfax County Police Department: Private First Class Justin Yorkdale

Montgomery County Police Department: Sergeant Patrick Keep

Prince George's County Police Department: Corporal Brendan Hughes

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority: Corporal Joshua Morris and Corporal Ian Pharoah

United States Capitol Police: Officer Seth Carr

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the recipients of the Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence and in recognizing WRAP for its 42 years of public service. Their efforts combined with the support of partner organizations and law enforcement agencies have saved lives and are deserving of our highest praise and gratitude. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

#### RECOGNIZING THE ENGAGEMENT OF BRIAN JOHNSON AND CAROLINE REYNOLDS

##### HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Brian Johnson and Caroline Reynolds on the occasion of their engagement. It is with great pleasure and excitement that I share the wonderful news.

Brian, a steadfast friend and dedicated professional, has been a true partner in our work with Veterans Guardian, helping countless veterans across the Nation achieve their well-deserved disability rating increases.

Fate brought Brian and his incredible fiancé, Caroline Reynolds, together at the U.S. Open during an event hosted by our mutual friend and colleague, Congressman RICHARD HUDSON. Their story reached a beautiful milestone over the Thanksgiving holiday on November 26, when Brian proposed to Caroline in her charming hometown of Nacogdoches, Texas. The engagement was a heartwarming celebration, surrounded by family, friends, and joyous festivities.

Love and marriage represent the joining of two hearts and lives, built on a foundation of trust, respect, and shared dreams. Brian and Caroline embody the promise to stand together through life's joys and challenges, growing stronger as individuals and as partners. Their love story is a testament to the beauty of finding someone who not only inspires you but also walks beside you every step of the way.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in congratulating Brian and Caroline on this exciting new chapter in their lives. I wish them boundless happiness, love, and success as they embark on their journey together.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF LAURENS "LARRY" RUBEN

##### HON. SUZAN K. DELBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Laurens "Larry" Ruben, a beloved professor, whose influence not only shaped my life but also the lives of countless students, colleagues, family, and friends. A source of light and a friend to all, we recognize the extraordinary impact Larry had on the many lives he touched.

Larry Ruben graduated from the University of Michigan with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biology. After moving to New York with his wife and longtime lab partner, Judith, he earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University and completed post-doctoral work at Princeton University before joining Reed College in 1955. At Reed, Larry was instrumental in developing the Biology Department's research-rich curriculum, improving student research opportunities, and emphasizing the importance of outside funding to support the program. In his research lab, which remained open until he was 86 years old, I had the privilege to conduct research during my time at Reed. Larry contributed significant insights into immunology and cancer biology.

Larry was not only an outstanding researcher but also an inspiring teacher and mentor. Known for his kindness and generosity, he was deeply committed to his students and their success. As my thesis advisor, he inspired my early career in immunology. Beyond his work in biology, Larry helped establish the Arts Division at Reed College and often sang with a Reed-based rock and roll band. He was also known for his exceptional dance moves, which left a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to witness them.

Larry Ruben was a friend, a mentor, and a man whose immense kindness and contributions will never be forgotten. We extend our deepest condolences to Larry's family, friends, students, and colleagues. Larry's impact will live on in all those he touched.

#### HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF DON RAINS

##### HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Don Rains, a dedicated public servant and lifelong resident of Princeton, North Carolina, who has made significant contributions to his community through more than two decades of service as Mayor.

For 22 years, Don Rains led Princeton with vision, determination, and an unwavering com-

mitment to the town's future. Under his leadership, the town saw critical infrastructure improvements, including advancements in water, sewer, and stormwater management, all of which helped prepare Princeton for future growth.

His leadership in key projects like the Princeton Community Center and the work surrounding the future Interstate 42 will have a lasting impact on the town and its residents for years to come.

In addition to his work as Mayor, Don Rains has served his community through his involvement in Princeton United Methodist Church, the Princeton Lions Club, and St. Patrick's Masonic Lodge. His leadership extended beyond the town, serving as Chair of the Triangle J Council of Governments and the US 70/1-42 Commission, where he advocated for regional and statewide development.

Don and his family believe deeply in giving back, and through their efforts, they have bolstered initiatives to enhance the quality of life for all Princeton residents, including support for the Princeton Public Library and the new Community Center.

Please join me in recognizing Don Rains for his exemplary leadership, dedication, and service to Princeton, North Carolina. His contributions will continue to shape the community he loves for generations to come.

#### HONORING THE SERVICE OF COLONEL ROBERT R. "BART" BARTRAN, III

##### HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Colonel Robert R. "Bart" Bartran, III. COL Bartran is a fellow Mississippian who has dedicated his life to serving our country and the great state of Mississippi.

COL Bartran was appointed as the Director of the Counterdrug Program for the Mississippi National Guard (MNG) in August of 2021, where he also served as the Commandant of the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy (RCTA) on Naval Air Station Meridian. He relinquished the responsibilities as Commandant of the RCTA in December of 2023 but continues to serve as the Counterdrug Coordinator (CDC) for the MNG to this date. In these roles, COL Bartran has led with distinction the critical counterdrug training program for the National Guard and Federal, state, and local law enforcement across Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

COL Bartran graduated from West Jones High School in 1988 and attended Jones County Junior College, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Southern Mississippi. He then completed his Master's Degree at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. COL Bartran valued continuing education and graduated from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Training Academy in Jackson, Mississippi.

Prior to being selected for the Active Guard and Reserve Program, COL Bartran was a police officer with the City of Ridgeland Police Department and the City of Laurel Police Department. His civilian law enforcement career

that spanned nearly a decade culminated with service as the Senior Narcotics Agent for the Jones County Sheriff's Department in Laurel, Mississippi.

COL Bartran entered the service on September 17, 1988, as a Private assigned to Service Battery, 3rd/83rd Field Artillery in the United States Army Reserves in Laurel, Mississippi. In August of 1991 he transferred to the 2/112th Armored Brigade in the Texas National Guard with duty in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1993, COL Bartran transferred back to the Great State of Mississippi and became a member of the National Guard. Assigned to the 184th Transportation Brigade, shortly followed by movement into the 112 Military Police Battalion, COL Bartran pursued his dream of becoming a Military Police Officer. On January 26, 1995, he graduated from Federal Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was commissioned into the Mississippi Army National Guard as a Second Lieutenant in the Military Police Corps.

In February of 1995, COL Bartran attended Military Police Officer Basic Course and was assigned to the 113th Military Police Company. For the next 8 years, COL Bartran would serve in multiple Military Police Officer positions to include Platoon Leader, Detachment Commander, and Company Commander of the 114th Military Police Company where he would deploy twice back-to-back in that capacity. The culminating event as a Military Police Officer for COL Bartran was in August of 2018 when he was selected as the Battalion Commander for the 112th Military Police Battalion in Canton, Mississippi, and served honorably in that position until February of 2021.

Upon his return from the second deployment, COL Bartran would take on a series of Staff Positions serving as a Maintenance Officer, Personnel Officer, Training Officer, Operations Officer, Plans Officer, Executive Officer, and then a Deputy Commander before being appointed as the Deputy Inspector General for the Mississippi National Guard. The majority of the aforementioned positions were performed in a full-time status after being hired into the Active Guard and Reserve System in April of 2004. COL Bartran has served at every echelon in the state from the platoon level all the way up to the State Headquarters Primary/Special Staff and a Brigade Command Equivalent.

COL Bartran's Awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal with 1 Bronze Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal with Numeral 2, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hourglass Device and M Device and Numeral 5, Non Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral 4, Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon with Numeral 2, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal (International Security and Assistance Forces), Joint Meri-

torious Unit Award with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Superior Unit Award, Mississippi Magnolia Cross, Mississippi Magnolia Medal with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Mississippi Commendation Medal, Mississippi War Medal with 1 Bronze Star, Mississippi Emergency Service Medal with 3 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Mississippi Counterdrug Service Medal, Mississippi Service School Medal, Mississippi Longevity Medal with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, Inspector General's Badge, and the coveted Air Assault Badge. Additionally, to COL Bartran's credit are five deployments over the course of his 35-year career, taking him overseas to Germany, Cuba, and multiple tours in Afghanistan.

I am thankful for Colonel Bartran's exceptional service to our country and the state of Mississippi, and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

**CONGRATULATING THE TIA MARIA FOUNDATION'S 1ST ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP GALA**

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to offer my heartfelt congratulations to The Tia Maria Foundation on the momentous occasion of its First Annual Scholarship Gala. Tonight is a special moment—not only because it marks a significant milestone for the foundation but because it celebrates the presentation of its inaugural scholarship to a well-deserving student. This organization has been built on the outstanding legacy Maria M. Luis left behind after a remarkable life that began in Terceira, Portugal, over 100 years ago. Maria endured countless hardships that began at the beginning of her life when she lost her mother during childbirth, causing her to step into the role of caregiver to her eight younger brothers and sisters. She valiantly took on this job and ensured that her siblings received the care and love that every child deserves. Maria didn't get a chance to pursue higher education due to her responsibilities tending to her family and other obstacles from her health, but this did not stop her from chasing a better life for herself and family. She migrated to the United States in 1970 and ensured that her children and grandchildren could have an excellent education. Now, The Tia Maria Foundation, under the leadership of Chairman Gavin Szilvasi, is continuing Maria's mission by empowering the youth of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

By awarding scholarships, this foundation is making a tangible difference in the lives of students, ensuring they have the resources they need to pursue the higher education that Maria so greatly valued. Your foundation is not just awarding scholarships, but it is also about making a way for students to reach their highest academic potential and achieve their greatest dreams. This mission is something we can all be proud of, and I want to take a moment to thank them for the difference they are making in so many lives. Congratulations on a great year. I understand that the journey to this point has not been easy, and I commend their resilience and dedication. I hope they have a great time tonight and take tonight

to celebrate the real difference their work in the community has had. God Bless The Tia Maria Foundation and God Bless our United States of America.

**HONORING RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER VICTORIA REINHARDT**

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the distinguished career of Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt on her retirement after 28 years of public service on the Ramsey County Board. Since her election in 1996, residents of District 7 in Maplewood, North Saint Paul and White Bear Lake have been well-served by her leadership. Currently, she also leads the board for the third time as Chair.

During her 28 years of distinguished leadership, Commissioner Reinhardt has made lasting impacts in areas including transportation, housing, public safety, fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship, and more. In 1999, she testified before a congressional committee on how local units of government can work together more effectively. In 2000, she was presented with the Bruce F. Vento Distinguished Service Award by the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. In 2012 she was named County Commissioner of the year by the Association of Minnesota Counties. Under her leadership as longtime chair of the budget committee, Ramsey County has earned the top bond rating for 21 consecutive years.

Commissioner Reinhardt's long-standing advocacy for environmental sustainability that originally led her to run for a seat on the county board against a 22-year incumbent. Previously, she was a founding board member and chairperson of the Recycling Association of Minnesota and chairperson of the White Bear Lake Recycling Advisory Committee. She is currently a member of the Association of Minnesota Counties' Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Local Government Advisory Committee, Vice Chair of the Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee for the National Association of Counties, and Vice-Chair of the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board. She is recognized across the country as a leader in environmental stewardship and a champion for sustainable practices throughout Minnesota's east metro communities.

Commissioner Reinhardt holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters of Business Administration from Metropolitan State University in Saint Paul. She received a Doctorate in Public Administration from Hamline University, where her dissertation informed her county work by focusing on calculating the cost savings of juvenile crime prevention.

It has been an honor to have Commissioner Reinhardt serve as my commissioner. I have deep respect for Victoria's work and dedication to public service and am grateful to call her a friend. As she retires, I wish her well, along with her husband JP and her entire family.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in this well-deserved tribute to Commissioner Victoria

Reinhardt on the occasion of her retirement after nearly three decades of distinguished public service on the Ramsey County Board.

**CELEBRATING BELL COUNTY SHERIFF EDDY LANGE**

**HON. JOHN R. CARTER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor Sheriff Eddy Lange and congratulate him on an outstanding career spanning decades of dedicated community service. Sheriff Lange's passion for keeping the citizens of Central Texas safe is clearly demonstrated by a lifetime of unwavering commitment.

Sheriff Lange's political career began in 1992 when he was elected as the first Republican Justice of the Peace in his county. After serving in this role for 12 years, Sheriff Lange was elected to the County Commissioner's office. Soon after, he was elected Bell County Sheriff, a position he held for another 12 years. He will retire with an impressive record of 14-0 contested elections.

Throughout his tenure, Sheriff Lange implemented several initiatives to enhance public safety. This includes the installation of new technology, such as in-car video systems and body cams, and the creation of the Mental Health Unit of the Sheriff's Department, which assists in mental evaluations, provides guidance and resources, and works to provide daily support within the jail system. He also adeptly managed the rapid growth of the inmate population, which doubled during his tenure.

Sheriff Lange founded several high-impact programs that have left a lasting impression on Bell County. He established the School Resource Officer Program, which has since grown from one to seven officers across three different school districts. This program was designed to facilitate quick responses to emergencies on school campuses and to foster positive relations between officers and the community. Along with his wife, Amy, Sheriff Lange created the Crossroads Program, a rehabilitation initiative to teach life skills to inmates and pave the way for their success. Finally, Sheriff Lange is the founder of the Bell County Sheriff's Foundation, which supports families who have lost loved ones in the line of duty. As well as providing scholarships to Bell County Peace Officers, the Foundation raises funds in the hopes of constructing a memorial to honor those who have given their lives in service to Bell County.

Please join me in commanding Sheriff Lange's lifelong commitment to keeping our neighborhoods safe. His legacy of achievement and service represents the very best of Central Texas.

**RECOGNIZING WES RHODES**

**HON. BETH VAN DUYNE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Wes Rhodes of Euless, who is

retiring after 38 years of service to North Texas. After graduating from Arlington High School, Wes received his associate's degree in Fire Protection Technology from Tarrant County College in Fort Worth. He began his career with the Haltom City Fire Department and spent 25 years as a Firefighter and EMT before quickly moving up the ranks to Fire Chief. In 2011, Wes accepted the position of Fire Chief for the City of Euless. During his time with the Euless Fire Department, Wes focused on community involvement, regional training, empowering the ranks, and maintaining open lines of communication with his team.

Wes' commitment to North Texas has been acknowledged through numerous accolades, including the Outstanding Leadership Award from Tarrant County Fire Service Training Center, Distinguished Alumni Award from Tarrant County Fire Service Training Center, Texas Association of Fire Educators' Instructor of the Year, and Fire Officer of the Year in 1996, 1998, and 1999 from Haltom City Fire/Rescue. His contributions extend beyond fire service, being named the 2024 Hurst-Euless-Bedford Rotarian of the Year for his work as president of the Hurst-Euless-Bedford Rotary Club.

Wes holds an array of certifications and licenses, including Certified Public Manager through Texas State University, Fire Service Chief Executive Officer through Texas A&M University, EMT, Master Firefighter, Master Fire Inspector, Fire Officer IV, HazMat Technician, Fire Investigator, Fire Instructor, Certified Head of Department, Fire Safety Officer, Swift Water Technician, and graduate of the Texas Fire Chiefs Academy. In 2021, he was promoted to Assistant City Manager of Euless. Wes and his wife Mary have been married for 34 years and are proud parents of two grown children, one of whom has followed in his father's footsteps as a Driver and Engineer with Grapevine Fire Department.

I thank Mr. Rhodes, for his unwavering dedication to protecting and serving our community. I congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement.

**HONORING FLORENCE DUNLEVY'S 105TH BIRTHDAY**

**HON. ANGIE CRAIG**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Florence Dunlevy, a constituent from West St. Paul, who will be celebrating her 105th birthday on December 21st.

Florence was born in Armour, South Dakota, in 1919 into a farm family, and raised a farming family of her own with her husband John. Throughout her life, Florence has been a loving mother at home and avid volunteer at church and in her community. These days, she has many hobbies to stay busy, including knitting blankets, hats, mittens, and tablecloths, many of which she has given away to U.S. servicemembers.

Her advice for a good life? Be happy, smile, enjoy your friends and family, and always try to live your best life.

We can all take inspiration from Florence's long life of humility and service. Happy birthday to Florence.

**HONORING BILLY AND JACKIE GLINES**

**HON. RANDY K. WEBER, SR.**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a remarkable couple who have been pillars of our community in Friendswood, Texas. The Glines Family, as some of the earliest residents of our beloved town, have left an indelible mark on the fabric of our society.

Billy and Jackie Glines share a love story that reads like a fairytale. They met in 1957, and it wasn't long before sparks flew. Their first date in July of that year set the stage for a lifelong romance. By late October, Billy was called to serve our great country. Knowing he had found his soulmate, Billy was determined to marry Jackie before someone else did, for he knew he would "never find another girl like her."

On Christmas leave from basic training, Billy and Jackie had a quaint ceremony on December 23, 1957. Their love was tested early on, as Billy soon departed for Germany to serve as an Advanced Weapons Support Commander.

Their bond only grew stronger over the miles and years. In November 1960, they welcomed their first child, Kimberly, followed by Britt in April 1964. Kimberly and her husband, Stan, have two children, while Britt and his wife, Shannon, have three. The Glines family legacy continues to thrive through these wonderful families.

Billy's career journey led him to establish the Mustang Auto Shop with his brother-in-law, a business that remains in operation today, serving the Friendswood community. Jackie, after initially working at a weight loss facility, found her calling as a secretary at Accident Insurance Company from 1958 to 1960. She paused her career to raise her children, then dedicated 30 years as a beloved school secretary at her son's elementary school.

Last Christmas, Billy and Jackie celebrated 67 years of enduring love and commitment. Their contributions to Friendswood are immeasurable, and their story is an inspiration to us all.

I first learned about this remarkable story through an excellent article authored by Ashley Forrest and published by Angela Knight in Friends of Friendswood Magazine July 2024 Edition. Their work in capturing and preserving the legacy of local families like the Glines deserves heartfelt appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent folks like Billy and Jackie Glines, whose lives are a testament to the values we hold dear—love, dedication, and service. Their story is a shining example of the American spirit, and their enduring marriage is a beacon of hope and stability in our community.

Here's to Billy and Jackie Glines, for their steadfast love, their service to our country, and their unwavering commitment to our community. May they continue to share many more happy years together.

RECOGNIZING THE 2024 BEST OF  
BRADDOCK AWARDEES

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the recipients of the annual Best of Braddock Awards. These awards are the result of collaborative work between the Braddock District Council and Braddock District Supervisor and are presented to individuals and organizations whose extraordinary efforts make our community a better place.

I have been proud to represent this community since my days as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. I have often said that civic engagement is a key indicator of a healthy community, and tonight's event proves that Braddock District continues to be one of the healthiest communities in all of Northern Virginia.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD the following recipients of the 2024 Best of Braddock Awards:

Organization or Club Making a Difference: The Young Hearts Club at C.G. Woodson High School, for their work in supporting students and their families facing serious medical challenges, to bring awareness to these issues and to fund research for cures and treatments.

Neighborhood Beautification, Enhancement, or Community-Building Effort: Burke Centre Conservancy (BCC), Open Space Committee, for supporting the BCC Board of Trustees with engagement, training, recommendations, and integration regarding environmental affairs and impacts within the Burke Centre community to aid in keeping Burke Centre in line with its motto, "In Harmony with Nature".

Most "Can-Do" Public Employee: Justen Allen Moreland, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, for his exemplary qualities of leadership, character and integrity as the Heavy Rescue driver at Fire Station 14.

Honorable Mention: Bob Lund, Lake Braddock, for leading the effort to cut down dead or dying trees and prune other trees as needed in the Lake Braddock common areas for many years.

Civic Engagement: Bob Cosgriff, Chair of Braddock District Council, for his tenacious and dedicated work to building a Council that greatly benefits its member neighborhoods.

Young Person of the Year: Callum Chang, Robinson Secondary School, for his passion for community service and his dedication to helping others.

Citizen of the Year: Bonnie Hopler, for her volunteer work all around Fairfax County including with the NOVA Lifetime Learning Institute, FACETS, and the Lamb Center.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2024 Best of Braddock honorees for their tremendous contributions to Northern Virginia. The level of civic engagement celebrated by these awards is a testament to the community spirit of the Braddock District. We are a better place for them.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF  
SENATOR DAN BLUE

**HON. WILEY NICKEL**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Senator Dan Blue, a dedicated public servant and lifelong North Carolinian, for his remarkable leadership as Senate Minority Leader and his tireless commitment to the people of our state.

From his early days growing up in Robeson County to becoming the first African American Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senator Blue has been a trailblazer and an advocate for working families. His leadership has focused on investing in public education, creating jobs, protecting the environment, and ensuring access to affordable healthcare.

Throughout his distinguished career, Senator Blue has consistently been one of the most effective legislators in North Carolina. He has shaped significant reforms in workplace safety, public schools, and the criminal justice system, leaving a lasting impact on the state. As Senate Minority Leader, his steady and principled leadership has been a guiding force for his caucus during some of the most challenging political times.

As he steps down from his leadership role, I honor Senator Blue's decades of public service and his unwavering dedication to the people of North Carolina. His legacy as a leader, advocate, and mentor will continue to inspire future generations of public servants.

Please join me in recognizing Senator Dan Blue for his extraordinary service to North Carolina.

RECOGNIZING SEAN ANNUNZI—  
EAGLE SCOUT

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate Sean Annuzzi on his exemplary achievement of attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. This distinguished honor represents the culmination of his dedication, having earned nearly 40 merit badges across a wide array of skill sets. From Automotive Maintenance to American Business to Archaeology, Sean has shown a deep commitment to becoming a well-rounded young man, always eager to learn. To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, he completed 14 additional merit badges, including Citizenship in the Nation, Personal Fitness, and Lifesaving. These accomplishments not only signify his dedication to personal growth but also his unwavering commitment to serving his community. Outside of his studies, he is already making a meaningful impact by mentoring children and teenagers with disabilities, exemplifying the spirit of compassion and service that the Scouting program seeks to instill. In his free time, Sean trains youth and teenagers in karate, equipping them with skills that foster both confidence and resilience. His efforts in this regard are highly commendable and are a testa-

ment to his character and leadership. Sean's family takes immense pride in his accomplishments, and I am honored to share in this sentiment. I have no doubt he will continue to do amazing things in the future. May God bless Sean and God bless the United States of America.

ment to his character and leadership. Sean's family takes immense pride in his accomplishments, and I am honored to share in this sentiment. I have no doubt he will continue to do amazing things in the future. May God bless Sean and God bless the United States of America.

HONORING SISTER MARTA CICHON

**HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sister Marta Cichon, a woman who has profoundly transformed the lives of Polish immigrant families and uplifted single mothers in Illinois.

Born in Zabkowice, Poland, Sister Marta's duty to humanity led her across the globe, serving in Australia before arriving in the United States in 2000.

Here, she recognized a pressing need to support mothers and their children who were vulnerable to homelessness, hunger, and lack of assistance.

Ultimately, she established the Single Mothers Home in 2008. The Single Mothers Home offers essential services, from legal assistance to mental health support, empowering women to rebuild their lives.

For nearly 15 years, Sister Marta has provided refuge, hope, and a path to independence for over 140 mothers and 180 children, including those who have experienced domestic violence.

To this day, these families maintain a close bond with Sister Marta, who considers them family.

I commend Sister Marta for her compassion, her resilience, and her unwavering service to our community.

Thank you (Dziekuje), Sister Marta.

Panie MARSZALKU. Zabieram dzis glos, aby oddac czesc siostrze Marcie Cichon, kobiecie, ktora gleboko zmienila zycie rodzin polskich imigrantow i podniosla na duchu samotne matki w Illinois.

Siostra Marta, urodzona w Zabkowicach, w Polsce, dzieki swojej powinnosci wobec ludzkości podrozowala po calym swiecie, sluzac w Australii, zanim w 2000 roku przybyla do Stanow Zjednoczonych.

Dostrzegla tam pilna potrzebe wsparcia matek i ich dzieci, ktore byly zagrozone bezdomnoscia, glodem i brakiem pomocy.

Ostatecznie w 2008 roku zalozyla Dom Samotnej Matki. Dom Samotnej Matki oferuje podstawowe uslugi, od pomocy prawnej po wsparcie w zakresie zdrowia psychicznego, umoziwiajacy kobietom odbudowanie swojego zycia.

Siostra Marta przez blisko 15 lat dawala schronienie, nadzieje i droge do samodzielnosci ponad 140 matkom i 180 dzieciom, w tym tym, ktore doswiadczyli przemoc domowej.

Do dzis te rodziny utrzymuja bliska wiez z Siostrą Martą, ktora uwaza je za rodzinę.

Chwale Siostre Marte za jej milosierdzie, odpornosc i niezachwiana sluzba dla naszej spolecznosci.

Dziekuje Siostrę Martę.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE METRA COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM

**HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to recognize the 40th Anniversary of the Metra rail system serving the people throughout Chicago and across the region.

The Metra commuter rail system—specifically the Milwaukee District North, the Union Pacific North, and the North Central Service lines—connects Illinois's 10th district to the city of Chicago and neighboring communities. From Winthrop Harbor through Zion, Waukegan, North Chicago, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Highwood, Highland Park, Glencoe, Winnetka, and Kenilworth; from Antioch through Lake Villa, Round Lake Beach, Grayslake, Libertyville, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Vernon Township, Buffalo Grove, and Wheeling; and from Fox Lake through Long Lake, Round Lake, Deerfield, and Northbrook, Metra is literally a lifeline for the citizens of the 10th District.

Metra began as an amalgamation of private rail services, some of which had existed for more than a century. Today, Metra is the fourth-busiest commuter rail system in the country and serves millions of riders throughout the region with eleven lines moving between 243 stations. Metra serves as a critical backbone for workers and families who depend on reliable, safe transportation through the frigid winter and sweltering summers. Metra is more than just a commuter rail system—it is an indelible feature of life in Chicagoland, serving workers, sports fans, students, the elderly, and many more.

I have been honored to consistently advocate for Metra's priorities during my service in Congress, and proud to have secured funding for projects for station modernization, accessibility improvements, and platform rehabilitation. These historic investments in our transportation infrastructure—made possible under the Biden Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—will help Metra flourish well into the future.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the accomplishments and service Metra, and the people who ensure the trains run, have provided for the past 40 years. To the engineers, conductors, planners, maintenance workers, advocates, and organizational leaders who dedicated countless hours over the decades to elevate Metra to where it is today—I thank and commend them for their vision and hard work. I look forward to continuing my work with Metra to promote its continued success—not just for the good of the Tenth District, but for all the people in the Chicago region.

RECOGNIZING METRA COMMUTER RAILROAD'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Metra, the commuter

railroad serving my constituents in Chicago, on its 40th anniversary.

Forty years ago, commuter rail operations largely relied on private railroads. However, due to inflation and the emergence of alternative transportation options, funding decreased significantly, and riders threatened to discontinue their use of commuter services. To address this issue, voters approved the creation of the Regional Transportation Authority, which established the Northeast Illinois Railroad Corporation to directly operate the trains. When the Rock Island and Milwaukee Road railroads went bankrupt, a new rail division was created to provide subsidies that kept the trains running and passengers on board.

As Metra faced a fragmented system of commuter rail operations, it acquired the Metra Electric and Illinois Central Gulf in 1987, ultimately taking over the operations of the Heritage Corridor, SouthWest Service, and North Central Service—marking the first new commuter line in Chicago in 70 years.

Today, Metra continues to subsidize operations on four lines owned and operated by freight railroads. After 40 years, Metra has become the fourth-busiest commuter rail system in our country, consistently providing reliable and essential transportation services to my constituents.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to assist Metra in securing federal funding for the Morgan Street Bridge Replacement project. This funding will replace the current timber rail bridge, built in 1974 as a temporary solution, with a new steel bridge. This upgrade will reduce maintenance needs and enhance safety and reliability for nearly 7.34 million annual riders.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Metra on its 40th anniversary. I look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure Metra's success for many years to come.

CELEBRATING JOHN M. BARR'S CAREER AND SERVICE, YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

**HON. DEBBIE DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of John M. Barr and his dedication to the legal profession. As City Attorney of Ypsilanti, Michigan for decades and founder of Barr, Anhut and Associates, P.C., John's commitment to serving his community is worthy of commendation.

John attended Michigan State University where he earned a Bachelor of Art in Social Science. He then earned his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. Throughout his successful legal career, John has been admitted into the State Bar of Michigan, the U.S. Federal District Court, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Outside of the law, John heroically served his country as member of the United States Army.

John has served as City Attorney for Ypsilanti since 1981. For over 43 years, he has served as the chief legal advisor to the City Council, Manager, and various city departments. As a testament to his dedication to the community, John founded Barr, Anhut and As-

sociates, P.C., which focuses on municipal law, estate planning/probate, real estate, and corporate law. His firm often provides bar recommended pro-bono services and John has always expected his staff to be active members of their community through volunteering and other service.

Outside of his career, John has personally served in numerous community organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and Washtenaw 100. He currently serves as board member of HighScope Educational Research Foundation, which aims to provide high-quality, equitable early childhood education to every child. He also serves as a board member of the Michigan Municipal League Foundation, which aims to create financial security among local communities to address individual social and economic needs across a wide set of industries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the magnificent career of John M. Barr and congratulating him on his retirement. His dedication to the city of Ypsilanti and the broader Michigan community has created a more just and equitable community for all. I thank John for his decades of service to our community, and we wish him all the best as he moves on to the next chapter of his life.

CELEBRATING DR. VENU GOVINDARAJU AS PERSON OF THE YEAR BY THE COUNCIL OF HERITAGE AND ARTS OF INDIA

**HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Dr. Venu Govindaraju as Person of the Year by the Council of Heritage and Arts of India. Dr. Govindaraju, a renowned professor and Vice President for Research and Economic Development at the University at Buffalo, is a trailblazer whose pioneering research has transformed artificial intelligence and document analysis, leaving an indelible mark on technological innovation and societal progress.

At a time when the practice of artificial intelligence seemed far-fetched, Dr. Govindaraju led a team that developed the world's first autonomous system for deciphering handwritten addresses. Initially funded by the U.S. Postal Service, this comprehensive technology processes mail at a staggering speed of 13 pieces per second, interpreting natural handwriting in the United States, with no additional guidelines, structured forms, or meticulously printed text. Subsequently adopted by the Australia Post and the UK Royal Mail, the system now reads nearly all the handwritten mail in the United States. Its efficiency stands as a cornerstone achievement in artificial intelligence.

The impact of Dr. Govindaraju's work extends far beyond postal automation. His contributions have overarched in diverse fields such as digital libraries, healthcare, and education. For the New York State Department of Health, his techniques have enabled early detection of illness outbreaks through automated healthcare analysis. Currently, as Director and Principal Investigator of the National Institute for Exceptional Education, he is leading a National Science Foundation-funded initiative to

develop AI tools for early screening of children with Dysgraphia and Dyslexia. This groundbreaking project aims to provide teachers with AI-based intervention tools to efficiently help them overcome their limitations.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating Dr. Venu Govindaraju as Person of the Year by the Council of Heritage and Arts of India. His contributions have not only advanced AI research but also demonstrated its profound impact on industries and communities. Dr. Govindaraju's leadership exemplifies the transformative power of science, innovation, and technology in addressing real-world challenges that have left an indelible mark on our city, and we are all the better for it.

**REMEMBERING MARY HAMMER, A PIVOTAL FOUNDER OF MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

**HON. JIMMY PANETTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Mary Hammer, a beloved community leader. She was a steadfast advocate for families in the San Lorenzo Valley and founded the Mountain Community Resources, originally known as the Valley Resource Center. Originally from Alameda, Ms. Hammer embodied our community values of positivity and hard work.

Ms. Hammer attended UC Berkeley, and shortly after graduating, she traveled abroad to teach in Germany where she met her husband, Joe. In 1965 Mary and Joe settled in the San Lorenzo Valley, a place very dear to Mary. She began teaching in San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District leaving a lasting impact on those she taught. While raising her family, Ms. Hammer quickly began to become an active leader in her community.

Engaging in local political campaigns, her efforts not only safeguarded vital water resources but also played a key role in shaping Santa Cruz County. As an environmentalist, her leadership was vital for emergency responses when a devastating flood and storms barreled through the community in 1982 and 1983. Mary's dedicated advocacy pushed local leaders to prioritize emergency preparedness, setting the stage for the Neighborhood Survival Network and Volunteer Emergency Preparedness Project.

Her leadership at Valley Resource Center as the center's first Executive Director guided the community through multiple natural disasters and paved the way for the center to transform from a volunteer-led organization to a nonprofit. Ms. Hammer Received the Outstanding Public Service Award from FEMA in Washington, D.C., which was one of many achievements she would go on to receive.

As a founding leader of the Valley Women's Club of San Lorenzo Valley, Ms. Hammer championed efforts for natural resource preservation and disaster preparedness. Today, Mountain Community Resources provides essential services such as food, clothing, counseling, legal assistance, and parenting classes to residents in need.

Mary loved being with family and friends, teaching, reading, and exploring nature as an avid cyclist, camper, and hiker. Mary is sur-

vived by her children, Eric and Lisa, and her grandchildren, Ruby, Charlie, and Nicole. She now joins her beloved husband, Joe, whom she fondly called "Joey."

**COMMENDING COMMISSIONER WAYNE GOODWIN**

**HON. WILEY NICKEL**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Wayne Goodwin, a dedicated public servant whose exemplary work as Commissioner of the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles has made a lasting impact on our state.

Wayne Goodwin has served North Carolina in many capacities, including four terms in the State House and eight years as Commissioner of Insurance. Since being appointed DMV Commissioner in 2022, he has tackled the challenges of a demanding agency with leadership, vision, and a commitment to improving services for all North Carolinians.

Under Commissioner Goodwin's leadership, the DMV has seen significant progress. He's made customer service a top priority, implementing extended business hours, introducing DMV self-service kiosks, and expanding online services. These innovations have reduced wait times and provided more convenience for citizens across the state. His efforts to address the agency's staffing shortages, reducing a 30 percent vacancy rate to 12 percent, speak to his dedication to supporting state employees.

A native of Hamlet and a Morehead Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill, Wayne Goodwin's long-standing dedication to public service, from his time as a young lawmaker to his leadership at the DMV, has greatly benefited our state.

I'm honored to recognize Wayne Goodwin for his extraordinary service and the lasting contributions he's made to the people of North Carolina.

**RECOGNIZING MICHELLE HINES**

**HON. BRETT GUTHRIE**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michelle Hines on her retirement from 33 years of working in community service with the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD).

A Logan County native, Michelle was born, raised, and resides in Auburn, Kentucky. After graduating from Logan County High School and Western Kentucky University, Michelle's first job out of college was with the Barren River Area Development District. In her tenure, which spans over three decades, Michelle has been a faithful servant to her community, advocating and supporting citizens throughout the region she oversees. She has been part of many critical initiatives including supporting the 2021 Tornado Relief fund, countless food drives, and BRADD's Veterans Directed Care Services expansion.

Mrs. Hines can best be described by all who know her as devoted, humble, and ready to

act. Her devotion throughout her career has inspired many people and enriched the lives of countless constituents. I want to thank Michelle for her work that has put the needs of others first and give recognition to her tenured career as she enjoys retirement spending more time with her husband, Kevin, and daughter, Rachel.

**RECOGNIZING MY 2024 FALL INTERN CLASS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO ILLINOIS' 13TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding class of interns who supported my office during the Fall 2024 term. Whether they were working in the bustling U.S. Capitol or amongst the cornfields of Illinois, their contributions to Illinois' 13th Congressional District have made a significant impact.

In my Washington Office, I was honored to work alongside Daryl Salinas, Wedad Osman, Stella Linn, and Sophia Hinich. These four interns have worked tirelessly to support my staff, skillfully navigating the complexities of working on Capitol Hill. They have been instrumental in managing direct correspondence with our constituents, drafting numerous memos and letters, and assisting with in-depth policy research. I am especially grateful for their work in preparing my office to transition to the 119th Congress.

Back in Illinois, I was honored to work with Avery Martin in my Champaign Office. Her commitment to constituent service by assisting my casework team has been tremendous, and I applaud her for the dedication she showed to the people of Central and Southern Illinois while also being a full-time student at the University of Illinois.

The impact that these five individuals left in my office will be felt for years to come as we transition to the 119th Congress, and we will be very sad to say farewell to this spectacular group of interns. I thank Daryl, Wedad, Stella, Sophia, and Avery for their service. I wish them all the best as they continue their professional and academic journeys.

**HONORING STATE REPRESENTATIVE ESTHER HAYWOOD**

**HON. CORI BUSH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I along with the people of St. Louis, rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Esther Jean Hill Haywood, a trailblazer, educator, public servant, and unwavering advocate for civil rights and social justice. Born in Memphis, Tennessee on January 15, 1940, Esther's early commitment to service shaped a lifetime of transformational contributions to her community and our nation. She dedicated herself to fostering equity in education, leading initiatives for underserved youth, and tirelessly advocating for social

progress. Esther Haywood's life exemplifies the power of purpose, passion, and perseverance.

As an educator, Esther broke barriers in the Shelby County Public School System, becoming one of the first African-American teachers to integrate its classrooms in 1967. Her pioneering efforts set the stage for generations of students and educators who followed. Her passion for educational equity continued in East St. Louis, Illinois, where she dedicated over 27 years to uplifting young minds as a math specialist, an organizer of student trips to Washington, D.C., and a mentor to countless youth.

Beyond education, Esther's service extended to leadership in civic and community organizations. As President of the St. Louis County Branch of the NAACP, she reactivated and expanded its influence, earning national acclaim. Her tenure as a Missouri State Representative demonstrated her commitment to justice and equity through legislation combating hate crimes, advocating for educational funding, and commemorating the contributions of civil rights icons. Esther's advocacy reached global audiences through her role as an Ambassador for Peace, reflecting her belief in the universal power of community and unity.

Esther Haywood's legacy is a testament to her boundless love for her family and community. Her devotion to her husband, Edward, their two daughters, and her grandchildren, exemplified the values of family, mentorship, and enduring strength. Her unparalleled contributions, whether in education, public service, or civil rights, will forever inspire those who follow in her footsteps. On behalf of Missouri's First Congressional District, I am honored to celebrate the life of a truly remarkable woman who embodied the spirit of service and uplifted everyone around her.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. MICHAEL T. McCaul

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Speaker, I had an emergency medical procedure and was absent from votes on December 10, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll call No. 493; YEA on Roll call No. 494; YEA on Roll call No. 495; YEA on Roll call No. 496; YEA on Roll call No. 497; and YEA on Roll call No. 498.

#### CELEBRATING DR. CHARLES BREITHAUPT

##### HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Dr. Charles Breithaupt for a lifetime of service to Texas education and student athletics. His active leadership in advancing interscholastic opportunities for young people and his steadfast commitment to student safety exemplify the very best of Texas.

Dr. Breithaupt has dedicated over 16 years as the Vice President of the University of

Texas at Austin and as the Executive Director of Texas' University Interscholastic League (UIL), supervising academic, athletic, and music competitions at thousands of schools across Texas. Throughout his tenure, he has made several pioneering achievements, including the implementation of a six-conference alignment, the establishment of the National High School Football Summit and the formation of the UIL Medical Advisory Committee. The Committee, under his leadership, has developed protocols mitigating health risks for students in high-impact sports.

Dr. Breithaupt's 50-year career exemplifies his passion for student success. Before working as Executive Director, Dr. Breithaupt served 17 years as a public-school teacher, coach, athletic director, and principal in Southeast Texas. He currently serves on the Texas Interscholastic League Foundation Board, which awards hundreds of scholarships annually to students attending Texas colleges and universities.

Dr. Breithaupt's numerous accolades include being named 1991 Texas State Coach of the Year, inductions into the Texas Basketball and Texas High School Football Halls of Fame, and two Lone Star Emmy Awards for his role as Fox Sports Southwest High School Spotlight Show Executive Producer.

I join Dr. Breithaupt's family, friends, and colleagues in celebrating his unwavering dedication and contributions. His efforts reflect his outstanding leadership and commitment to fostering a legacy of opportunity and achievement for Texas students.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. NICK LaLOTA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. LaLOTA. Mr. Speaker, I regret to have missed this vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 499.

#### RECOGNIZING GRAYFORD F. PAYNE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

##### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Grayford F. Payne on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Department of the Interior after 38 years of Federal service.

Grayford Payne has spent his career serving the American people in a number of roles within the federal government. Shortly after graduating from George Mason University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Mr. Payne served as an Auditor-in-Charge in the Naval Audit Service. In this role, he was responsible for audit and program reviews of Department of Defense National Security Science and Technology programs.

After eight years, Mr. Payne joined the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission where he served seven years as Director of Financial Services. During his time there, he was in

charge of the Commission's financial accounting system and its automated revenue billing and collection system.

In 2002, he joined the Department of the Interior as the Deputy Chief Financial Officer for Indian Affairs where he was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer which included all financial, accounting, budget, procurement, and property functions. He was promoted just three years later to the role of Chief Financial Officer and then again to the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary-Management in 2008.

There, he oversaw the planning and execution of the Indian Affairs \$4.5 billion annual budget, and his organizational responsibilities encompassed all administrative functions to include finance, budget, acquisition, property management, human resources, homeland security, planning, audit and evaluation, and more.

Mr. Payne moved to the Bureau of Reclamation within the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2010 and was named Reclamation's Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Administration and Budget, a role he held until his retirement. He oversaw agency resources, policy formulation, finance, law enforcement, dam safety, program and budget, and more. He also served as Reclamation's Chief Financial Officer.

Throughout his public service, Mr. Payne received numerous awards for his dedication and leadership. He was honored with the Secretary of the Interior's Gold Leadership Award in 2007, Bronze Leadership Award in 2006, and Silver Leadership Award in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Grayford F. Payne on his retirement. I am proud to represent Mr. Payne in Congress, and I thank him and his family, wife Sharon and children Robert, Katherine, Elizabeth, and Carolyn, for his honorable 38 years of service to our Nation.

#### RECOGNIZING MATTHEW GLEASON—EAGLE SCOUT

##### HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, I have the privilege of recognizing and celebrating Matthew Gleason for achieving the great rank of Eagle Scout after 13 years of steadfast commitment to the Scout Oath and Law. Matthew's scouting career began as a Cub Scout in the fall of 2011, where he rapidly ascended to leadership roles, including Assistant Patrol Leader and Patrol Leader. Early on, he earned the prestigious Arrow of Light award, a testament to his dedication and hard work. Matthew's commitment to community service has been nothing short of exemplary. He logged nearly 200 hours helping neighbors, friends, and strangers alike, demonstrating an inspiring dedication to those around him. In addition to his service, he has shown impressive physical fitness by completing a challenging 33-mile hike through rigorous terrain, successfully reaching every mission-required destination. For his Eagle Scout project, he dedicated over 160 hours to the Aura Volunteer Fire Company, where he built a shed for their antique fire truck, preserving

and honoring the department's rich history. Beyond his scouting achievements, Matthew is a remarkable student. He has consistently made the honor roll ten times and has been recognized on the Superintendent's List five times. As a standout soccer player, he has lettered three times at Delsea Regional High School and has earned a spot on the All-County team for all three years. Looking ahead, Matthew has clear and ambitious goals: he plans to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering and eventually establish his own engineering firm. In a beautiful full circle moment, inspired by the tremendous support he received from firefighters during his project, Matthew is determined to serve his community as a volunteer firefighter. I am confident that Matthew will excel in any path he chooses, and I eagerly anticipate the significant impact he will make in our world. May God bless Matthew and God bless our United States of America.

**COMMENDING JIMMY "MRBEAST"  
DONALDSON**

**HON. WILEY NICKEL**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2024*

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Jimmy Donaldson, better known as MrBeast, a remarkable North Carolinian who has significantly impacted both the digital world and our local communities.

Raised in Greenville, MrBeast has become one of the most influential figures in digital media while embodying the values of entrepreneurship, innovation, and philanthropy that drive North Carolina forward.

MrBeast's ventures, including the Team Trees and Team Seas campaigns, have drawn attention to critical environmental causes. Team Trees raised over \$24 million to

plant more than 24 million trees worldwide, and Team Seas collected over \$30 million to remove 30 million pounds of trash from our oceans.

His commitment to giving back is also seen through the MrBeast Philanthropy channel, which has delivered over a million meals to those in need across eastern North Carolina. These efforts have not only rallied millions of supporters but have set a new standard for global activism.

With over 330 million YouTube subscribers and millions more on other platforms, MrBeast has turned his success into an opportunity to bring industry, jobs, and creativity to our state.

I honor Jimmy Donaldson today not only for his entrepreneurial success but for his philanthropic endeavors and his efforts to create a more connected and inspired community.

Please join me in recognizing Jimmy Donaldson for his contributions to North Carolina and beyond.

**SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2024 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

**MEETINGS SCHEDULED**

**DECEMBER 18**

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Caroline A. Crenshaw, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Gordon I. Ito, of Hawaii, to be a Member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

SD-538

10 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine the climate-driven insurance crisis.

SD-608

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of James Bernard Coughlan, of Illinois, Halie L. Craig, of Pennsylvania, and William Patrick J. Kimmitt, of Virginia, each to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission.

SD-215

2 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Intellectual Property

To hold hearings to examine the RESTORE Patent Rights Act, focusing on restoring America's status as the global IP leader.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine trade wars and tariffs.

210-CHOB