

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING CROSS COUNTRY NATIONAL CHAMPION MIKE FOUT OF LAPORTE, INDIANA

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, today I rise before you to offer a word of congratulations to Mike Fout of LaPorte, Indiana. Fout traveled to San Diego on December 13, 2007 as the number five seed for the Foot Locker Cross Country Championship. He returned home to LaPorte the national champion.

To win the race, Fout defeated the second place finisher by seven seconds, for a total time of only 14:50. It was a personal best for Fout, who was not deterred even by the cool, muddy conditions on the day of the race.

Fout was neither favored to win the race, nor even to come in the top five, but his coach, as well as his family and friends, knew that he would be able to accomplish whatever he set out to do. He has now ensured himself a place in the history of the National Cross Country Championships by achieving the ninth fastest time ever in an event that has been held for twenty-nine years.

On his way to becoming the first Indiana runner to win the national championship, Fout stayed with the lead pack for most of the 5K race, and then broke away after the two mile mark. He maintained this position for the rest of the race, with no challengers coming forward to disrupt his lead.

All of this took place after Fout was crowned state champion of Indiana in the 3200-meter race, led team Indiana to an all-star event, and won the Midwest Regional Championship.

Mike Fout's hard work was given him the well-deserved title of national champion. But in congratulating him, I would also offer my congratulations to his coach Tim Beres, LaPorte High School and the greater LaPorte community for their support of the cross country program.

HONORING STEVE BENEFIELD'S SERVICE WITH THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Steve Benefield for his service with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. Steve resigned from the Chamber on January 4 after serving a decade as its president.

Rutherford County has experienced tremendous growth in recent years, and the Chamber has been growing right along with it. The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce is

now the third largest in Tennessee, and Steve has been instrumental in spurring the county's economic development efforts.

He was a leader in efforts to bring a conference center to Murfreesboro, worked to acquire a new Chamber building and county visitor center, and furthered development at Smyrna's airport. His efforts have helped to ensure that Rutherford County will continue to be a desirable place to live and raise a family.

Steve has been a leader not only in business efforts, but also in the community. He is active in his church and with his sons' baseball teams, where he draws from his experience pitching for the Blue Raiders at our shared alma mater, Middle Tennessee State University.

The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce is losing a great asset, but I am happy Steve and his family are staying in Murfreesboro. I wish them all the best.

TRIBUTE TO CATHY TRAVIS

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, this month Capitol Hill saw the departure of constitutional aficionado and political guru Cathy Travis—who recently retired after serving the House for 25 years, the last 18 as my communications director and senior advisor.

Cathy's dedication to and interest in public service has led her from Jonesboro, AR, to the corridors of the Capitol. Politics always fascinated her, and after graduation from Arkansas State University she went to work for former Congressman Bill Alexander (D-AR) as a press assistant. She then served in various capacities for the House Floor staff. After serving in the Chief Deputy Majority Whip's office for 6 months, she came to work for me.

Words cannot begin to describe what Cathy has meant to me, my staff, and the people of the 27th district of Texas. For 18 years, I have relied on Cathy for her professionalism, work ethic, and friendship. She has been a wonderful and effective spokeswoman for the issues of south Texas, and reporters always expressed their gratitude for her guidance and assistance.

Whether through her infectious laugh or her candid advice, Cathy always left a resounding impression on those she met and worked with. Members, staff, and reporters always took time out of their busy schedules to catch up with her and share some friendly chisme. During her last few weeks in my office, numerous people stopped to wish her best of luck and congratulate her on her retirement.

Cathy will now dedicate her energy to writing and marketing her books. Her first book, *Constitution Translated for Kids*, has received numerous accolades and will soon be published in Spanish. In the book, the original text of the Constitution is paired side-by-side with

a kid-friendly interpretation to pique interest and stimulate further discussion of American liberties.

Though I bid Cathy a sad farewell from my office, it will certainly not be a goodbye. I look forward to seeing her around the Capitol when she comes up to catch up with old friends.

Cathy remains a trusted member of my family, and I will always seek her counsel on matters political and personal. I wish her the best of luck during the new phase of her life.

HONORING THE LA VERGNE HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize one of the top marching bands in the nation: La Vergne High School's Wolverine Marching Band, which represented middle Tennessee on November 17 at the U.S. Scholastic Band Association Grand National Championships.

This was the Wolverine Marching Band's first time to compete in the USSBA championships. Only 68 marching bands throughout the Nation were invited to the competition held in Baltimore, Maryland. In addition to the LHS band placing eighth overall, the school's drum line placed fifth, and the color guard placed 11th.

The theme of La Vergne High School Music is "where perfection and hard work meet." It must be very gratifying to the students, staff, parents, and supporters to see the rewards of countless hours of practice. I congratulate the band on their accomplishments and wish them continued success in the future.

I commend the Wolverine Marching Band: Director of Bands Edward Freytag, Assistant Director of Band Chris Crumley, Visual Coordinator Tim White, Color Guard Instructor Megan Taylor and Kirby Cooper, Band Members: Sarah Baron, Melissa Barscz, Brad Beal, Allison Beck, Taylor Bentley, Casey Bidini, Katelyn Blair, Chelsea Boulanger, Joey Brewer, Leonard Brown, Tony Brown, William Bryant, Jacob Burton, Tyler Channell, Jordan Cooley, Porsha Cooper, Rachel Covert, Tyler Covert, James Day, Shanice Derrick, Catherine Drescher, Tara Dryden, Amber Dugger, William Duke Jr., Dylan Duke, Carl Dye, Shelby Erny, Aeron Falknor, Cheyanne Fletcher, Jessica Forbis, Loretta Fougeray, Courtney Frierson, Matthew Fusco, Endre Gereben, Andres Gonzalez, Matt Goodman, Katie Green, Alexandria Hahn, David Hardy, Ross Harvey, Elizabeth Henderson, Jessica Henderson, Brianna Herron, Matt Hickman, Curt Hills, Chassity Hoback, Zach Hodges, Andre Holt, Mary Huckleberry, Brooks Hunter, Wesley Hurless, Greg Jackson, Ethan Jerrell, Felicia Johnson, Elise Jones, Emily Jones, Will Kelley, Jeremiah Lang, John Leaver, Brittany Lee, Ginger Levinson, Kwesi Manuel, Jennifer

• 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.

Maroney, Melvin Mason, Myesha Mason, Tara Mathews, Cici McCormick, Brittney McDuffie, Emily McDuffie, Aaron McGowen, William McGowen, Shelby McIntosh, Michael Meacham, Josh Merbitz, David Miller, Tyler Mingle, Josh Moore, John Morris, Zach Murray, Kayla Nickel, Michael Pagan, Stephanie Parker, Aaron Parris, Ashley Patten, Shelby Perkins, Shamikia Perry, Charlie Prazak, Darrin Pugh, Zach Pugh, Briana Rainey, Josh Raymond, Lacey Reade, Shinead Riddle, Lucas Rigo, Rivera Rico, Brett Runge, Nick Sargent, Shannon Schmitz, Tyler Shapard, Jordan Shurmer, Ashley Sledge, Corey Smathers, Devon Smith, Logan Smith, Sammy Stack, Lauren Stanley, Mary Taylor, Lindsey Tedford, Alison Thatcher, Jesse Thurgood, Curtis Vandever, Latoya Wade, Lane Waddell, Marissa Waddell, Cory Waters, Lamar White, Tandra Wilson, and Jacob Wood.

HONORING MSGT. JASON BILLIOT

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to MSgt. Jason Billiot, as he retires from the United States Air Force. MSgt. Jason Billiot entered the Air Force in 1988. After completing Basic Training at Lackland AFB, TX, AB Billiot went to Chanute AFB, IL to be trained as a Special Vehicle Mechanic. After completion of tech school he was assigned to the 363rd Transportation Squadron, Shaw AFB, SC. While at Shaw AFB he not only honed his skills on Firefighting and Refueling Equipment, but also attended Airmen Leadership School.

In 1994, after five years at Shaw, SRA Billiot got his first assignment to the 345th Training Squadron at Lackland AFB. He completed ASE requirements for master medium/heavy truck technician and was also awarded his CCAF degree in vehicle maintenance. Two years later, as a result of BRAC realignment, the school house was moved to the Naval Construction Training Center in Port Hueneme, California.

While in California, Sgt Billiot performed duties as MTT instructor, world training instructor, special vehicle instructor, and aircraft refueling vehicle instructor supervisor. In 1999, Sgt Billiot and his wife, Jeanne, received the blessing of the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth. In 2000, Sgt Billiot received his orders for the 354th Transportation Squadron Eielson AFB, Alaska.

While in Alaska, Sgt Billiot was supervising and running shops such as NCOIC of customer service, NCOIC of special purpose vehicle element, and superintendent of the dispensing element. He also attended the NCO Academy at Elmendorf AFB. In 2003, MSgt. Billiot was again assigned to the school house in Port Hueneme, CA. As Master Sergeant, Billiot took leadership roles as diesel phase head, gas phase head, interservice mechanic curriculum developer and skills knowledge test author. MSgt. Billiot finishes out an outstanding and eventful career after 20 years of faithful service to his country as interservice mechanic school superintendent.

It is my pleasure to recognize the character and dedication of MSgt. Billiot upon his retirement.

KENYA ELECTION CRISIS

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my deep concern regarding the current crisis in the nation of Kenya. Approximately 600 people were killed in violent clashes across Kenya, following disputed presidential elections that took place on December 27, 2007. Violence erupted in Kenya after President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the election and opposition leader Raila Odinga disputed the results. European Union observers have said the presidential poll was flawed and the Government of Kenya has acknowledged that voting irregularities took place.

Unfortunately, the effects of post-election violence in Kenya continue to echo throughout the country. An estimated 250,000 people have been forced from their homes and are in need of food, shelter and medicine. Human rights activists and aid workers are concerned that families displaced by the conflict will be unable to return to their homes—many of which were burned down—in the near future. Though the fighting has subsided from its peak immediately after the elections in late December, tension remains high between political opponents divided along ethnic lines. There continues to be incidences of violence, demonstrations, and looting in several neighborhoods of Nairobi and Mombasa and in large parts of the westernmost provinces.

The time has come for both the government and the opposition to enter into a good faith dialog for the benefit and welfare of the Kenyan people, who deserve a political process that reflects their dedication to transparency, democracy and progress. Therefore, it is vital for President Kibaki and Raila Odinga to come together without preconditions to discuss how to end the post-electoral crisis in a way that reflects the will of the Kenyan people. Additionally, both leaders must take steps to end the violence and ensure respect for the rule of law and respect for human rights. The full restoration of freedom of the press and freedom of peaceful assembly is an integral part of this goal.

Madam Speaker, our hearts go out to the people of Kenya who have suffered throughout the post-election ordeal and I urge the Kenyan Government and the opposition to resolve this crisis for the benefit of their people.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA DISTRICT AWARD OF MERIT

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor three constituents from South Texas: Heather Blakemore, Rene Hernandez, and Sue Stachowiak.

The three have been awarded the District Award of Merit from the Boy Scouts of America, and it is the highest award bestowed upon volunteers in a district that symbolizes their exceptional and noteworthy service to youth in the Boy Scouts of America.

Heather's involvement with scouting began as an assistant tiger cub den leader in Pack 59 for her son, Jess. Since then she has served as den leader, assistant den leader, pack committee member, and assistant scoutmaster. She has also served as the Mistress of ceremonies for the District Recognition Dinner for 2 years and Mistress of ceremonies for the Council Banquet for 1 year.

Rene's scouting career began as a den leader for his son, Rene, in Pack 25. Since then he has served as Webelos den leader and cubmaster. In 4 years, Rene has served on Cub Scout Day Camp staff, Cub Adventure weekend staff, Pinewood Derby staff, Scoutorama staff, and the district training team. He has also served as a unit commissioner and assistant district commissioner, the round-up staff, and participated in multiple Scoutreach recruitments initiatives the last 4 years.

Sue has been involved in scouting for 7 years, beginning with serving as assistant tiger cub den leader in Pack 5 for her oldest son. Since then she has served as den leader, assistant den leader, Webelos den leader, assistant Webelos den leader, assistant cubmaster, assistant scoutmaster, and troop committee member.

The Boy Scouts of America continue their tradition of providing quality programs for boys and young men. I am proud of all three parents for taking an active role in lives of our youth. These parents serve as shining examples of love and duty in our communities.

HONORING THE FORREST HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Rocket Band of Blue of Forrest High School in Chapel Hill, TN, for winning the Division I State Championship. The Rocket Band of Blue's field commanders were also state champions, and the band took first place each for soloist baritone, high music, and high visual.

The Governor's Cup, the championship trophy they received, is one of many accolades the marching band has earned this year. The Rocket Band of Blue is the Grand Champion of the Montgomery Central Marching Contest, the Trousdale County Marching Band Yellow Jacket Invitational, and the Highland Rim Marching Contest. The band received a superior rating at the Middle Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association Marching Festival and third place at the Mid-South Marching Invitational.

I am sure it must be very gratifying to the students, staff, parents, and supporters to see the rewards of countless hours of practice. I congratulate the Rocket Band of Blue on their accomplishments and wish them continued success in the future.

I commend the 2007 Rocket Band of Blue: Madeline Bell, Kimber Luna, Taylor Blanchett, Crystal Cannon, Rachael Harris, Kim Meachem, Brooke Russell, Caleb Boone, Lauren Fatherly, Tyler Hargrove, Tyler Mierecki, Tyler Williams, Jared Blanchett, Paul Caraglio, Matt Kline, Jana Bunkall, Jed Hall,