

her impressive academic accomplishments. I congratulate her upon being named a recipient of PG&E's 2012 Bright Minds Scholarship and wish her the best of success in her future endeavors.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BILL HUIZENGA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 312, I was absent due to a family matter. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

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RECOGNIZING THE 2012 HIDDEN POND ENVIROTHON TEAM

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 2012 Hidden Pond Envirothon Team and congratulate them on achieving Second Place in the Virginia State Envirothon Competition.

The Envirothon Competition promotes problem-solving among high school students in the areas of forestry, wildlife, soils, aquatics, and other current environmental issues. What is most unique about the competition is the opportunity to work in the field with access to actual natural resource professionals. The competition aims to foster stewardship, improve management concepts and communication skills, and promote critical thinking, decision making, and team building.

This year's members of the Hidden Pond Envirothon Team are Liam Berigan (Robinson HS), Matt Baker (W. T. Woodson HS), Murjan Hammad (home-schooled), Owan Mulvey-McFerron (W. T. Woodson HS), and Peter MacDonald (West Springfield HS), with Coach Neal MacDonald. The team won first place in the local Fairfax County Envirothon Competition as well as at the Area II Regional Competition. This allowed the team to move on to competition at the state level at James Madison University in Harrisonburg. While competing against the top 15 teams from across Virginia, the Hidden Pond Envirothon Team placed second for the second year in a row. This year's oral presentation focus was titled "Low Impact Development and Nonpoint Source Pollution," for which the team placed first. Hidden Pond also placed first in the wildlife category, second place in the aquatics category, and third place in the forestry category.

I would like to offer special thanks to Mike McCaffrey and Jim Pomeroy. Mr. McCaffrey has coordinated the Envirothon Program at the Hidden Pond Nature Center for many years. His efforts have enabled the team to compete at the state level as Hidden Pond is typically the only team not sponsored by a high school. Mr. Pomeroy has served as Hidden Pond's Site Manager, supporting the Envirothon Team with great enthusiasm. Through their commitment and encouragement to this program, many of the students have gone on to become local volunteers or

work in careers focused on protecting the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues join me in congratulating the 2012 Hidden Pond Envirothon Team for their performance in the Virginia State Envirothon Competition.

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CONGRATULATING THE NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the National Air Traffic Controllers Association on the 25th anniversary of the Union's founding.

NATCA represents more than 20,000 air traffic controllers and other aviation safety professionals who run the safest, most efficient air traffic control system in the world. These men and women are dedicated aviation professionals who come to work every day knowing that they have to perform their jobs with 100 percent accuracy 100 percent of the time. The American people entrust their lives and the lives of their loved ones to NATCA members each and every time they step on an airplane. This is a responsibility that NATCA takes seriously. Since NATCA's founding in 1987, the United States National Airspace System has maintained its record as the safest airspace in the world.

Mr. Speaker, NATCA's 20,000 FAA aviation safety professionals are dedicated federal employees. Our nation's incredible aviation safety record is due in part to the fact that these men and women are federal employees whose number one priority is to ensure the safety of the flying public. I applaud NATCA on this remarkable achievement and congratulate them on their 25th anniversary.

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CONGRATULATING THE DEER PARK HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL TEAM

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Deer Park High School Softball Team for becoming the 2012 5A State Champions. Winning the state championship is a great accomplishment that takes an incredible amount of effort, dedication and teamwork from every player. This win is Deer Park High School's first state championship title since 1955. Our entire community is proud of the Deer Park Lady Deer's success and hard work to bring home the state trophy.

In addition to winning the state championship, the Deer Park Lady Deer had an impressive season record of 31–8, with a district record of 8–2. In the state semi-final game, the team set a state tournament record for the most runs scored in a single inning by scoring ten runs in the fifth inning of the game.

The talent that exists on this team is exceptional. Out of ten eligible spots, Deer Park

players were selected for seven spots on the state 5A all tournament team. Those players include Kristen Davenport, Jo Rivera, Caitlin Plocheck, Lexi Fryar, Alexis Garcia, Haley Harrison, and Alana Tinker. Kristen Davenport was named the championship's Most Valuable Player, MVP, and also the Houston Chronicle's Girl Athlete of the Week for June 3, 2012. Caitlin Plocheck was also nominated for the Houston Chronicle's Girl Athlete of the Week.

Congratulations to the Lady Deer Softball Team from Deer Park High School for winning the 2012 State Championship in Texas. We are all very proud of your outstanding achievement!

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HONORING SGT JOSEPH ANGEL CAPOCCIAMMA

**HON. STEVE STIVERS**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Joseph Angel Capocciama. Sergeant Capocciama passed away on Sunday, May 20, 2012, from complications of injuries sustained in service to his country in Iraq.

The son of Alan and Maria Capocciama, Joseph Angel Capocciama was born on May 29, 1987, and raised in Grove City, Ohio. He graduated from Grove City High School in 2005. A true patriot, Sergeant Capocciama joined the United States Army on May 23, 2006, just one week before his 19th birthday.

While proudly serving his country in Iraq, Sergeant Capocciama received the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Valorous Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon. He retired from the Army on April 7, 2010.

It is because of the sacrifices of men like Joseph Capocciama that we continue to enjoy the freedoms that we do today. I am deeply thankful for all that Sergeant Capocciama endured to preserve our freedom and for his heroism. He is survived by his wife, Kayla, and his children, Joseph Angel Capocciama, Jr. and Cheyenne Faith Capocciama, for whom he set an inspiring example of service and patriotism.

On behalf of the citizens of Ohio's 15th Congressional District I would like to honor the service and memory of SGT Joseph Angel Capocciama.

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A TRIBUTE TO DR. STEVEN LADENHEIM

**HON. ROBERT A. BRADY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Steven Ladenheim. For the past 34 years, Dr. Ladenheim has served the city of Philadelphia with his extensive knowledge of otolaryngology.

A graduate of the Medical College of Pennsylvania, now known as Drexel University College of Medicine, he has won multiple awards

in his field. He is an accomplished surgeon, a clinical assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and an entrepreneur with a highly successful private practice. Dr. Ladenheim recently retired as medical director for Blue Cross, and spent 20 years in practice at Presbyterian Hospital, as well as Nazareth Hospital and Hahnemann Hospital.

Dr. Ladenheim succeeded through hard work and sacrifice. In order to become a doctor he served in the military during the Vietnam War to pay his way through medical school. Throughout his career, he has created programs of outreach to the underserved community of Philadelphia, donating medical services and medicine to families and children who are denied access to health care. Taking the Hippocratic Oath to heart, Dr. Ladenheim is renowned for treating patients regardless of ability to pay, and to help those in need without any thought to his own benefit.

In addition to all of his accomplishments in the field of medicine, he has maintained a strong family life with his wife and three daughters, as well as a notable presence within the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing Dr. Steven Ladenheim for his contributions to the city of Philadelphia and to the medical community.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL  
DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,776,139,241,010.39. We've added \$5,149,262,192,097.31 to our debt in just over 3 years. This is debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

Forty-eight years ago today, the Civil Rights Act was approved. This act provided for a brighter future for all Americans. We must not eclipse the hope included in this legislation with the grim future of debt repayment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BILL HUIZENGA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 313, I was absent due to a family matter. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

TO COMMEND COLONEL JOHN J.  
STRYCUCLA

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleague, Congressman JAMES

MORAN (VA—8th), to recognize COL John J. Strycula for his service to our Nation and his extraordinary leadership as Commander, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Belvoir.

On July 7, 2010, COL Strycula assumed command of Fort Belvoir, which is located in the shadow of the Nation's capital and one of the most diverse and complex installations in the United States. In addition to the monumental responsibilities of providing support, services, and a high level quality of life to service members, their families, and related support providers of more than 200,000 people, he was immediately immersed into the most complicated Base Realignment and Closure mission within the Department of Defense.

COL Strycula assumed personal stewardship of all aspects of realignment under BRAC 2005. To accomplish the many aspects of this mission, he oversaw the activities of 150 mission partners on more than \$4 billion in construction and infrastructure improvement projects needed to accommodate the increase of installation population from 30,000 to 48,000 military and civilian personnel. Belvoir North, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, the Wounded Warrior Complex, the USO Family Support Center, expansion of housing units including state of the art handicapped-accessible housing, child care centers, roads, bridges, fire stations, office buildings, and parking structures are examples of projects completed under the careful watch of COL Strycula.

The "brick and mortar" component of BRAC 2005 tells only part of the story; as impressive as these accomplishments are, the manner in which COL Strycula led the men and women under his command and the mission partners demonstrate the depth of his professionalism and commitment. His open and engaging command climate encouraged initiative and innovation. He has been fully involved in addressing and resolving community issues, both in the neighboring community and in the military community. COL Strycula successfully formed consensus among the various stakeholders on contentious issues, and he established strong relationships of mutual respect with elected and executive leaders in the local, State, and Federal Governments.

The first and most important priority for COL Strycula consistently has been the care and wellbeing of our soldiers and their families. Through his outstanding leadership, vision, and total dedication to soldiers, families, and civilians, he has profoundly impacted and Unproved the quality of life for all at Fort Belvoir. Serving our country in uniform, at home or in harm's way on foreign soil, is the highest of callings, and it is our sacred obligation to ensure that our military and their families receive the support, protections, respect, and services that they have earned.

Prior to his assignment as Commander of Fort Belvoir, he served in numerous capacities including several tours of duty in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. COL Strycula stood up and trained the Army's first Military Intelligence Interrogation Battalion, which he then led in Operation Iraqi Freedom. COL Strycula is a highly decorated officer; his awards include the Bronze Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Joint Service

Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, and the Parachutist and Air Assault Badges.

Mr. Speaker, we ask our colleagues to join us in commending COL John J. Strycula for his exceptional leadership of Fort Belvoir through the BRAC process, and in thanking him for his years of service to our country. COL Strycula's accomplishments and expertise have contributed immeasurably to our national defense and security, and he has rightfully earned the admiration, respect, and gratitude of all. We also extend our sincere appreciation to COL Strycula's wife, Wendy, and their 5 children for their support and sacrifices, which have enabled COL Strycula to serve with such distinction. COL Strycula will soon be deploying to Afghanistan, and our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family for his safe return home.

IN HONOR OF GEDLU METAFERIA

**HON. RUSS CARNAHAN**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Gedlu Metaferia, for his decades of service to the people of the St. Louis, Missouri.

Mr. Metaferia started the African Mutual Assistance Association of Missouri, AMAAM, on April 10, 1983 and for nearly 30 years has helped over 30,000 African immigrants and refugees settle into the St. Louis metropolitan area. Today St. Louis is home to almost 6,400 African immigrants and refugees.

As Executive Director, Mr. Metaferia skillfully managed the day-to-day operations of his organization, and he successfully led it toward the fulfillment of its mission to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate social services to African refugees and immigrants. The work of this organization includes: assistance with applications and insurance forms, mediation, education about civic participation, interpretation during medical visits, transportation, and locating housing. Sadly, we are all aware of the plight of refugees and other displaced communities; therefore, I am eternally grateful for the adjustment assistance provided by Mr. Metaferia and his organization.

Mr. Metaferia's efforts have fostered a greater appreciation of diversity, and have advanced ethnic inclusion in the St. Louis community. Moreover, he remains active in the community as a poet, freelance writer, human rights activist, advocate for refugee and immigrant rights, and a member on several non-profit boards. Mr. Metaferia has led by example and demonstrates resilience as a pillar of strength, sound judgment, and compassion.

Mr. Metaferia has dedicated his life to serving and promoting the welfare of others, and he has exemplified extraordinary commitment and selfless dedication. I congratulate Mr. Gedlu Metaferia on his many accomplishments, and I thank him for his continued service to our community.