

will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Josh has the determination and drive to be successful in anything that he does and his exemplary work with Principal Financial Group is a testament to that. As the Recruiting Manager at Principal Financial Group, Josh is passionate about helping others and utilizes his abilities to place people in the jobs best suited for their professional growth. Josh has donated his time to others through his work with the Animal Rescue League and the PACE Juvenile Center. In all aspects of his life, Josh is an example of the hard work and service that makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Josh in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Josh on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING FORMER SENATOR STEPHEN M. BREWER FOR BEING NAMED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank former State Senator Stephen M. Brewer for his 26 years of service in the state Legislature and to congratulate him on being recognized as Citizen of the Year by the Mount Wachusett Community College Foundation. Senator Brewer retired last year after 26 years of service in the state Legislature. Most recently, he served as Chair of the powerful Senate Ways and Means Committee. Senator Brewer is a giant; someone who looked out not only for his constituents and his community but also for Massachusetts. For 26 years Senator Brewer was a champion for Central Massachusetts. While I know his wife Valerie and daughters April and Audrey are happy to have him home, it's safe to say that we will miss his leadership in the State House. I can think of no one finer to receive this year's Harold E. Drake Citizen of the Year award for his service to the Commonwealth and to the constituents he represented over nearly three decades of public service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 16; Tuesday, March 17; Wednesday, March 18; and Thursday, March 19, 2015, I was out on medical leave for surgery and unable to be present for recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 113 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 647),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 114 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 648),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 115 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 876, as amended),

"No" on roll call vote No. 116 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 138),

"No" on roll call vote No. 117 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 138),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 118 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1191, as amended),

"No" on roll call vote No. 119 (on agreeing to the McKinley Amendment to H.R. 1029),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 120 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 1029 with instructions),

"No" on roll call vote No. 121 (on passage of H.R. 1029),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 122 (on agreeing to the Edwards Amendment to H.R. 1030),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 123 (on agreeing to the Kennedy Amendment to H.R. 1030),

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 124 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 1030 with instructions),

"No" on roll call vote No. 125 (on passage of H.R. 1030),

"No" on roll call vote No. 126 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 152),

"No" on roll call vote No. 127 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 152),

"No" on roll call vote No. 128 (on passage of S.J. Res. 8), and

"Yes" on roll call vote No. 129 (on approving the Journal).

TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDRA REBELES

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Alexandra Rebeles attends Foster High School in Richmond, Texas. The essay topic is: in your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

AN UNDENIABLE DUTY

"One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors."—Plato

The American political system is an extremely complex system that impacts the lives of every single citizen who lives in our great country. Whether it's a presidential election or an election for local lawmakers, participation is essential in order for the system to be efficient and fair. A failure to vote or a choice to be ignorant in such important matters has severe consequences. Every election that takes place in the United States has a large degree of determining if a law will be passed or if a candidate will take the steps needed in order to create a better

country and system. In a situation like a presidential election, every single vote carries great significance and could alter which candidate will win. In my opinion, it is ironic how you see various Americans who have not voted protesting over laws, representatives, or presidents they do not agree with. The majority of the protesters will admit they did not vote but still feel the need to protest. How can you protest a law or principle if you did not even care enough to vote in the first place? I think those who choose not to vote need to take a look in the mirror and realize they are doing our country a disservice. Participation is the first step in order to create a better America that can serve its citizens in more efficient ways.

I have a firm belief that ignorance towards politics creates a veil that clouds the mind and leads to apathy and a lack of participation in political procedures. Ignorance in global and American affairs is one of the reasons why various people don't know or care about politics. Education in these subjects or matters greatly alters the ways a mind perceives political events. For example, watching an evening news program like the NBC Nightly News or the ABC World News can inform a viewer on the political matters plaguing or helping our country. Education can make a huge difference.

Awareness of political matters is imperative in order for this country to keep moving forward. Without any input from citizens, how can our elected officials suggest legislation that could help America in the long run?

ALEX LOW

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alex Low for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Alex Low is a 10th grader at Pomona High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alex Low is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alex Low for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING J.R. GALLEGOS

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pleasanton City Councilman J.R. Gallegos on the occasion of his retirement after twenty-three consecutive years of service to the people of Atascosa County and the City of Pleasanton.

J.R. Gallegos began his career as a public servant in 1989 when he was appointed to the Pleasanton Housing Authority Board of Directors. Three years later, at the age of twenty-eight, Mr. Gallegos was first elected to the Pleasanton City Council, representing the people of District Four. Since then, he has served on the Pleasanton City Council for twenty-three years. Mr. Gallegos has also been involved in a number of other community organizations and committees in Atascosa County and the City of Pleasanton.

Over the last two decades, Mr. Gallegos has dedicated his career to improving and enriching the lives of Pleasanton residents. During his time on the City Council, he has supported the construction of a municipal airport terminal, the police and public works departments, and a sports complex. Mr. Gallegos was also involved in plans for the wastewater treatment plant expansion, the Civic Center and Library, City Hall renovations, and a variety of other infrastructure improvements. His contributions have been described as "vastly improving the quality of life" for Pleasanton citizens. It is clear that he has helped to "pave the way to a bright future" for the City of Pleasanton.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize J.R. Gallegos for his twenty-three years of outstanding service as a Pleasanton City Councilman.

HONORING SAMUEL MCCRAY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor an extraordinary community advocate and activist, Samuel McCray.

He is a citizen of the Mississippi Delta, who was born on a plantation in a shack in the middle of a cotton field just South of Lambert, Mississippi. He attended the segregated schools in Quitman County, graduating in 1968 from Quitman County Industrial High School. On May 1, 1968, the infamous class of '68 led a walkout, protesting the arrest of Willie Bolden, a Southern Christian Leadership Conference organizer sent to prepare the upcoming March on Washington, the Poor People's Campaign. The first leg of the operation was to start in Marks with mule drawn wagons. An all white Mississippi Highway Patrol unit of twenty troopers attacked the gathering of over 500, and forced them off the jail lawn. For Samuel, this would be his first act of civil disobedience. After high school, he would attend Coahoma Junior College (now Coahoma Community College) and Delta State University (then Delta State College). While in the Delta, he helped to revive the Black Students Organization, becoming second in command in the organization. This organization managed to convince the administration to add African American Studies, to recruit black women to the Delta Bell Cheerleader Squad, to increase financial assistance, and to employ more of our people in the classroom.

While out on summer break in 1973, Samuel would join the local chapter of the NAACP and was chosen to head up the voter's league, the political arm of the organization. A few years earlier, the county purged the voter

rolls. His first charge was to get ready for the 1975 election so voter's registration was number one priority. During this period of history, the voter rolls and the poll books were coded by race which proved to be a valuable tool. The team discovered pretty quickly that the poll books would provide all the information needed. The consistence voters would be the priority group, believing they would be the easiest to get back on the books and to the polls on Election Day. By the deadline, the group had registered over 1500 black voters. The work had only begun; the decision was made to run a slate, a candidate for each position. Not because of the possibility of winning, there was no chance of that, the black vote was less than a third of the total. Will black voters vote for black candidates? About 80% of the black votes were cast for our candidates. The black leadership could not have been happier; we were on our way. Voter registration was a step-up, and an opportunity presented itself in 1978 with the death of the white county supervisor in District 1. The district had more black voters than another and they were concentrated in the Crenshaw and Darling Precincts. With an attractive candidate, and a good ground game we felt we could make history, and we did. The opposition accused the group of cheating; too many black voters received help with their ballot. They found themselves in court, which turned out to be a blessing. The ruling was that any voter with a physical disability, blind or illiterate could receive assistance from the person of their choosing. Another slate was put together for the Town of Lambert, which had an At-Large scheme where a voter had to case a five candidate's ballot in order for the vote to count. Again, the group looked for the most attractive candidates, one of whom was J.D. "Jake" McAdory. Everybody liked him, including both blacks and whites, and he was a standup guy. He was the first African American elected to the Board of Aldermen. As always, the group would run a slate in county elections, realizing that keeping voters engaged was the best tool to building a strong electorate.

In the late 70's Samuel would align himself with people like Attorneys: Frank Parker & Margret Carey; the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Victor McTeer & Willie Bailey, Johnnie Walls, Senator Henry Kersey, and others that were challenging the legal schemes hindering blacks from the ballot box. Sam was certified as an expert witness on white block voting, voting harassment, voter's intimidation and at-large voting. The effort would lead to redistricting or redrawing county supervisor and municipal lines to give black voters a fair chance to elect candidates of their choosing. By 1983, with creating three black majorities districts and getting rid of the at-large voting practice, they began getting much closer to achieving the goal set many years earlier. By 1987, they controlled the Quitman County Board of Supervisors. Today, all the municipalities with the exception of two are headed by African American mayors, and all of the governing boards are black majorities. While an activist in Quitman County, Sam worked at Coahoma Opportunities, Inc. (COI) in Clarksdale where he started as a community driver, but quickly moved up in the organization into middle management. He was promoted to Coordinator of Nutrition Access and to an Equal Opportunity Officer. In those posi-

tions, the organization would open the first WIC & food bank on site and help to bring free breakfast to public school cafeterias. While with COI, Samuel was serving on the Sub-Area Advisory Council, the group that made recommendations on health facilities in the State. His works on the council led to the creation of Aaron Henry Community Health Services Center in Clarksdale.

In 1986, Michael "Mike" Alfonso Espy hired him to organize the northern counties of the district where he applied what he had learned from his work in Quitman County, and applied that to a multi-counties model, resulting in some of the best turnout. In 1988, Governor Ray Mabus named Samuel to the Mississippi Housing Finance Corporation. The board later re-named the organization to the Mississippi Home Corporation, where he was elected Chairperson of the Program Committee. In this role, Samuel worked with local nonprofits to access programs such as USDA's Community Self-Help program, the 504 repair loan/grant and the 502 home ownership, which is the program used by Samuel to purchase his home.

In 1993, Congressman Mike Espy would step down to accept the Secretary of Agriculture in the Clinton Administration, the first African American ever to hold this position. The community was happy to have one of its own, but it put the 2nd District at risk. Thankfully, the leadership agreed to a mini convention process that led to a consensus candidate, Honorable BENNIE THOMPSON, County Supervisor from Hinds County, who was one of the single most respected, elected officials in the State, black or white. THOMPSON would go on to win and take office in April of 1993. Samuel never envisioned holding office or working for a politician, but this is BENNIE THOMPSON, he's a living legend. After lobbying his District Director almost daily, Samuel was hired on June 1, 1993 as a Field Representative and Caseworker, the greatest job on the planet. The Congressman assigned him the counties he had worked over the last twenty years. Samuel's office was located in Marks, his home town. Armed with marching orders to assure Federal Agencies deliver services fairly to his constituents, Samuel served as a resource to non-profits, governmental agencies and small businesses. In the years that followed, the Clinton Administration would institute the Empowerment Zone and the Enterprise Community Initiative. Part of Samuel's assigned counties received the Enterprise Community designation. North Panola would receive a portable water system that provided safe drinking water for hundreds of families. Local limited resource farmers would get a vegetable processing plant so they could better market their produce. An unexpected benefit to an unexpected group of about fifty families living in the Cotton Street Community, got sewer services for the first time. A street separated the town of Marks from this community, and because of their activism in the 60s, they were still being punished. The residents of Cotton Street found out and met with the governing body, and had them resubmit their application to include Cotton Street. On March 17, 2008, then candidate for President of the United States Barack Obama came to Greenville for breakfast with the Congressman and staff. Upon his election, the Congressman took his entire staff to the Inauguration of the first African-American President in his lifetime.