

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.

Sheryl Soundar attends Manvel High School in Manvel, Texas. The essay topic is: select an important event that has occurred in the past 15 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

When asked for the most important event in our country's history within the past fifteen years, most people will say September 11, and not without good reason. That day launched the United States into a war that still demands American soldiers. It cost many lives, changed an entire country's outlook on foreign affairs, and put a standstill on many domestic issues. However, another event that is often forgotten in the glaring spotlight of 9/11 is Hurricane Katrina.

Personally, I have many memories of Katrina and the damage that it did to New Orleans, having lived in Houston during that time. This story occupied an entire month of evening news broadcasts and cemented into my memory the struggles that the people of New Orleans faced. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also faced a struggle, but of a different sort. FEMA came under extreme criticism for its inability to offer assistance and for the prolonged lack of access to resources that caused in the New Orleans area. The public relations fiasco that resulted tarnished not only FEMA's reputation, but also the reputation of the already heavily criticized Bush administration. Many active duty troops were deployed to the area to assist during the recovery period in light of FEMA's failing.

As a whole, the Gulf Coast region was deeply affected by Hurricane Katrina, physically as well as mentally. New Orleans faced harsh economic conditions and harsh odds as its people began to rebuild, and surrounding states also felt this burden. However, the greatest impact Katrina had on the United States was on our collective psyche. At first, it seemed like another problem stacked on top of the ever present war on terror, but as the worst pain subsided, the country realized that this was, more than it was a tarnish or a natural disaster, an opportunity. Americans from coast to coast were horrified by the state of affairs in New Orleans and poured out their sympathy for those in need. As a nation, we were saddened and strengthened by Katrina, finding fear in the condition of the Gulf Coast and solace in the ability of Americans to unite behind a common goal.

ALICIA BALDERAS

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 Alicia Balderas for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Alicia Balderas is an 11th 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 Alicia Balderas 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 Alicia Balderas 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.

CONGRATULATING THE DEDICATED HOOSIERS OF KEM KREST CORPORATION

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the dedicated Hoosiers of Kem Krest Corporation headquartered in Elkhart, Indiana.

They have recently been named the General Motors 2014 Supplier of the Year.

Kem Krest started in 1979 and since then has grown and expanded their customer base beyond the automotive industry to include the agriculture and defense industries.

The exceptional quality of products from this supplier reflects the hard work of their Hoosier employees.

They have demonstrated a clear commitment to go above and beyond as well as take the utmost pride in the products they supply.

I would like to personally thank the Hoosiers of Kem Krest Corporation for their hard work and dedication.

Kem Krest Corporation serves as another great example of a successful business in Northern Indiana and their devotion to making quality products should be recognized.

The dedication Kem Krest has shown makes me proud to represent Indiana's Second Congressional District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on March 23 and 24, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on #130, 131, 132, 133, and 134. I would have voted "NAY" on #135.

A TRIBUTE TO JOEL FORTNEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Joel Fortney for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Joel has the determination and drive to be successful in all that he does, and his exemplary work with Principal Global Investors is a testament to that. Now the portfolio manager of Principal Mid-Cap Value Fund, Joel's success has continued. Joel and his wife are active in their community too, where they support the Blank Park Zoo by sponsoring animals. In all aspects of his life Joel's example of hard work and service makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Joel 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 Joel 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.

TRIBUTE TO RIDA SARWAR

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.

Rida Sarwar attends Pearland High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

239 years ago, the thirteen colonies declared independence from Great Britain. Since then, the United States government has always played a large role in the lives of Americans throughout history. The role of the government plays a huge part in society. The government should always cater to the needs of its citizens and provide an organized society.

In 1776, America declared its complete autonomy from Great Britain by signing the Declaration of Independence. Fifty-six men signed the document that would later become the most important document in American history and a symbol of independence. These men signed the declaration for many reasons. The most well-known reason was because of the absence of representation

for the colonies in the British parliament. These universal founding principles of representation and equality have become the basis of American government. Democracy upholds these principles in the government. The government is indirectly ruled by the people through representatives. These representatives are responsible for directly seeing to the needs of the people who live in their specified region. The government's job is to accommodate the needs of the citizens. American government is "for the people, by the people". The power of the government is limited by its citizens. This is self-government in its truest form.

The government is also responsible for creating an organized society. People pay taxes to the government so that the government can generate revenue and maintain its operations. In return, the government should be responsible for providing various services to the people. The government should provide fundamental services such as basic infrastructure, security and a stable economy. A country cannot support itself without a solid infrastructure. Therefore, the government should provide adequate facilities for their citizens. They should be responsible for providing urban infrastructure such as water supply, electricity and roads. It is the government's duty to effectively utilize the resources within a country for development. This means that the government should also be able to provide other services. Tax money should be used to create better education, health facilities and social security. The American government has always provided the best safety for its citizens. A government should always protect its citizens, because they should come first. Lastly, the government is responsible for keeping a stable economy. Without a stable economy, the people cannot survive.

The American government was established to serve the best interests of its people. Its role is to provide for them. It should provide an organized society and a good government. The government's main role is to serve its people.

ROW4RICE

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Rice University Rowing team has taken a step to further rowing sports in the City of Houston. To help raise the funds needed to build a water sports facility on Buffalo Bayou in downtown Houston, two of the teams coaches will row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic in the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge. Coaches Mike Matson and David Alviar, attempting to be the first Texans to complete this feat, will begin this massive undertaking in the Canary Islands, and finish on the Caribbean island of Antigua.

The duo will take this challenge in a boat named after Ann McCormick Sullivan.

Ann Sullivan was a firefighter with Station 68 in Houston when on May 31, 2013 a 5-alarm fire at the Southwest Inn took the lives of 4 brave men and women, including Ann. This deadly fire completely shook the community. Ann was just 24 years old.

Coach Mike Matson was a volunteer firefighter in the City of Stafford and had the opportunity to run calls with Ann. Ann, nicknamed "mighty mouse," was a strong, resilient

firefighter, who was never afraid to step into danger to help others. Mike recalls training days when Ann would extend the heavy hose full of water to its full length, a task difficult even to the largest men on the squad. Ann lived up to this name, never wavering in her determination.

Coach Mike felt that it was fitting that the boat be named after one of Houston's heroes who truly represents the spirit of resilience needed for this race. Under the name Row4Rice the two coaches will raise money to build proper facilities to host rowing, kayaking, canoeing, and other water sports. They have pledged to donate \$5,000 to the Ann McCormick Sullivan Foundation to support women in firefighting. Mike, David and the rest of the Rice rowing team are to be congratulated as they begin this massive undertaking in the spirit of one of Houston's heroes.

And that's just the way it is.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STATE
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM EN-
HANCEMENT ACT OF 2015

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced the National Guard State Partnership Program Enhancement Act of 2015, which strengthens this critical "soft power" global partnership program. The National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) provides unique capacity building capabilities to Combatant Commanders and U.S. Chiefs of Mission via 68 comprehensive partnerships between National Guard units across the United States and 74 partner nations with the potential for further development.

For over 20 years, the SPP has directly supported the broad national interests and security cooperation goals of the United States by engaging partner nations via military, socio-political, and economic conduits at the local, state, and national levels. The program's public diplomacy effectiveness lies in its ability to leverage the full breadth and depth of U.S. defense and interagency capabilities from within the state-country relationship.

The value of the SPP lies in its ability to concentrate a small component of the U.S. defense structure—a state's National Guard—on a single country or region in support of U.S. Government policies and objectives that are coordinated between the Combatant Commander and U.S. Chief of Mission. This concentrated focus supports the development of long term personal relationships and interagency coordination mechanisms that would not otherwise exist. By its nature the National Guard is uniquely positioned within the military to develop these long term relationships.

The SPP is becoming an increasingly more important tool for Combatant Commanders and U.S. Chiefs of Mission in achieving long-term U.S. strategic objectives. The program has developed from assistance and partnership with primarily Eastern European nations to a program that supports all the non-CONUS combatant commanders. Recently, the long-term benefits of this program became evident. In particular, I highlight the 22-year relationship between the California National Guard

and Ukraine. When the instability in Ukraine began the California National Guard got some of the clearest insight we had into the situation by virtue of the long term relationship they had forged with Ukraine's military and civil institutions.

Of additional interest to me are the opportunities that SPP poses for our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. I believe the SPP will further expand and strengthen relations with many Asian and Pacific nations. The program clearly demonstrates the U.S. commitment to the region and our allies. In fact, one of the newest partnerships was established last year between Tonga and the Nevada National Guard. These types of partnerships help to develop critical capacity building capabilities for allies in this critical region of the world.

Most importantly, the bill I introduce today eliminates the 2016 termination of the program. Additionally, it removes the program restriction to be primarily a humanitarian and emergency response force and expands it to support the national interests and security cooperation goals and objectives of the United States. Elimination of this restrictive language helps to recognize the true nature of SPP and acknowledges broader partnerships that already exist. Requiring the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to develop "core competencies" will help the Combatant Commanders and U.S. Chiefs of Mission more effectively use, develop and maintain partnership programs.

Further, the bill ensures that Department of Defense, a state National Guard and Department of State's equities are considered in the context of broader program goals and lays out the roles of the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and Chief of the National Guard Bureau in managing the program. The bill puts in place critical oversight mechanisms to establish metrics through which to analyze the impact of the program. Lastly, this bill creates an accounting line within DoD that allows National Guard funds to be used in support of the program and ensures accountability of the funding. Funds for the program currently come several separate Service, Department of Defense and Department of State accounts. The Congress needs more visibility on the use of these funds and establishing a central account is critical to this endeavor and is similar to how the counterdrug program resources its activities.

The capabilities and missions outlined in this legislation leverage the capabilities inherent in the National Guard and will strengthen our relations with allies and nations across the globe. The dual role of the National Guard provides them a unique opportunity to support Combatant Commander as well as an Ambassador's needs in a given country. I believe this legislation is necessary to codify current practices and enhance the program's positive impact worldwide.

I thank Congressman TIM WALZ of Minnesota; Congressman JIM BRIDENSTINE of Oklahoma and Congressman DOUG LAMBORN of Colorado for being original co-sponsors of this legislation. Our efforts highlight the bipartisan support for SPP and need to enhance this critical capacity building tool. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this critical legislation.