

mismanagement by National Guard officials, and previously signed a letter to the Secretary of Defense demanding that the DOD halt recruitment efforts.

Despite progress on these issues, I have serious concerns with the bill. I have always advocated for maintaining Congress's constitutionally-confirmed prerogative to declare war under the War Powers Act and limiting the President's authority to engage in armed conflict without the consent of Congress. I strongly oppose the NDAA's authorization of spending for wars that are not congressionally approved. The President has sent troops to Iraq, Syria and elsewhere without seeking an Authorization of Use of Military Force (AUMF), a violation of the War Powers Act.

Additionally, the NDAA continues to bar the use of funds from transferring detainees from the Guantanamo Bay prison and prevents the President's plan to permanently close this facility. The prison at Guantanamo Bay has been a black eye for the United States, has eroded relationships with our allies, undermined U.S. missions, and put our troops at risk of retaliation.

Most importantly, this bill fails to rein in the only federal agency that is not fully auditable and continues to authorize wasteful spending without implementing proper oversight of the Pentagon's budget. I am outraged by a recent report revealing \$125 billion dollars in largely administrative, bureaucratic spending at the Pentagon was covered up. I have fought for fiscal responsibility and accountability at the Pentagon so that scarce funds can better be spent on the basic needs of our troops, obligations to veterans of past wars and other domestic priorities throughout my time in Congress.

Although this year's NDAA contained significant bipartisan compromises it also failed to address some of my longtime concerns.

RECOGNIZING NATALIE RAMOS AS AN OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVANT

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Natalie Ramos for her tireless work as Constituent Advocate for Florida's Ninth Congressional District in Central Florida.

Beginning as an intern in 2015, Natalie showed great promise from the start. She excelled and went on to become a Constituent Advocate where she played a vital role as part of the casework team. With her help, the office was able to assist members of the community, namely immigrants, veterans, and those seeking urgent assistance. She has a bright future ahead of her as a public servant.

I am honored to recognize Natalie Ramos for her service to my office and the constituents of Florida's Ninth Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH K. AWADJIE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I stand before you today to honor Mr. Joseph K. Awadje for his years of compassionate advocacy and tireless work to improve the lives of our students.

Born and raised in Ghana, Mr. Awadje is fluent in the languages of Twi, Fanti and Ga. Emigrating from Ghana, Mr. Awadje was drawn to CUNY because of its rich diversity and broad service to New Yorkers of all backgrounds. Mr. Awadje is dedicated to ensuring that students have an active role in university governance, and is committed to improving the quality of public higher education through advocacy efforts at the university, city, and state levels.

Mr. Awadje earned his Master of Science Degree at Brooklyn College, specializing in Natural and Behavioral Sciences, in June of 2016. Prior to his graduate studies, Mr. Awadje earned his B.S in Exercise Science from Brooklyn College. In 2014, Mr. Awadje was elected the thirtieth Chairperson of the University Student Senate (USS) and just completed his second term as the USS Chairperson and CUNY Trustee.

Mr. Awadje has a long record of service at CUNY. While at Brooklyn College, he has served as Senator of Student Government, President of the Forensics Debate team and the Academic Club Association, and Captain of the men's soccer team. Shortly upon returning to Brooklyn College for his Master's degree, Mr. Awadje was elected President of the Graduate Student Organization.

During his tenure at USS, Mr. Awadje was an integral part of the grassroots campaign that restored a Merit Based Scholarship within the New York City Council Budget. With strong support from the City Council Committee on Higher Education, Mr. Awadje helped secure \$11.1 million in the FY2015 Budget and \$17 million in the FY2016 budget for a Merit Based Scholarship for CUNY students. In 2016, Mr. Awadje led a successful student campaign to halt tuition increases at CUNY, while helping acquire increased funding for essential university programming.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Mr. Joseph K. Awadje for his consistently remarkable dedication to education and longstanding commitment to improving our community.

TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT OF THE CADILLAC AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, BILL TENCZA

HON. JOHN R. MOOLENAAR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. MOOLENAAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Bill Tencza, upon his retirement as the President of the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce.

Bill became the President of the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce in 2000. Over

the years Mr. Tencza has been a champion in furthering industry and education in Cadillac. He has played a vital role in the formation of the Business Expo and the LEAD meetings, along with fostering relationships between those in business and education.

Mr. Tencza remains very active in the community and has served as a judge for the Congressional App Challenge from our district. He also works with the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance, Cadillac Industrial Fund and the Cadillac Area Industrial Group.

After 16 years as the President of the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce, Bill has left a legacy of hard work and dedication to the community of Cadillac.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Michigan, I am honored today to extend my gratitude to Bill Tencza for his many years of hard work and service in the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce, and wish him a happy and healthful retirement.

RECOGNIZING 50 YEARS OF THE BI-STATE REGIONAL COMMISSION

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Bi-State Regional Commission on 50 years of collaboration to promote important changes to transportation, communication, technology, and the environment in the Quad-Cities area.

Through intergovernmental and regional cooperation, this commission has brought local governments from Illinois and Iowa together to address important economic issues and collaborate on projects for the benefit of the region. Some notable projects include developing our interstate system, the expansion of the 1-74 bridge and improvements to passenger rail service and transit systems in the region. I applaud the efforts of this commission for their commitment to excellence in the Quad Cities.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to congratulate the Bi-State Regional Commission for this remarkable achievement and I thank them for their 50 years of service to our community.

IN TRIBUTE TO NANCY O'KEEFE

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nancy O'Keefe who is retiring from the Historic Third Ward Association, HTWA, on January 3, 2017. The HTWA was organized 41 years ago and Nancy has served the organization for 21 of those years. She began since 1996 and for 20 of those 21 years of service has been the Executive Director of the HTWA. During her tenure as Executive Director, the agency has grown tremendously; she has gone from supervising 2 employees to over 50.

In the 20 years since Nancy O'Keefe took charge as executive director, she has helped HTWA act as a catalyst to develop the district

as an innovative, livable and exciting mixed use neighborhood while preserving its historic and creative character. The neighborhood has emerged with vibrant agencies, businesses, restaurants and entertainment venues including: The Broadway Theatre Center with its spectacular Cabot Theatre draws audiences into the ward at night, many fine restaurants bringing a contemporary vibe and flair to the neighborhood, a Congressional District Office, and the annual Third Ward Art Festival has joined the roster of Milwaukee's outdoor events. However, the construction of the Milwaukee Public Market has been the pivotal point in guaranteeing the Third Ward's sustained viability, as well as, a new hotel, the Journeyman. However, the HTWA does not want to rest on its laurels, Nancy would like to see more public space, more people getting off the streetcar and shopping and dining in restaurants, as well as, a grocery store and a drug store in the Third Ward.

Nancy O'Keefe is responsible for the many social events which are staples of the downtown culture and brought many visitors to the Third Ward including: Summer Sizzles, Christmas in the Third Ward, Gallery Nights, World's Largest Coffee Break, Shortest & Smallest St. Patrick's Day Parades, Sculptures on Ice Competitions, and Small Business Saturdays. She has also served on numerous boards including: Architectural Review Board, Friends of Lakeshore State Park, and Downtown Neighborhood Association.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to know and work with Nancy O'Keefe. In fact my Congressional District Office is sited in the Third Ward. I have had the privilege of joining with Nancy and other dignitaries to promote Small Business Saturday and other events in the Third Ward. I join with friends in congratulating her on her retirement. I wish her much success as she transitions into a different phase of her life.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Nancy O'Keefe and celebrate her outstanding leadership. Nancy O'Keefe has overseen the Third Ward's transformation from a district with growing potential into an urban success story. The citizens of the Fourth Congressional District and the State of Wisconsin are privileged to have someone of her ability and dedicated service working on their behalf for so many years. I am honored for these reasons to pay tribute to Nancy O'Keefe.

COMMEMORATING FRANK
ABDNOUR, OWNER OF THE SPOT-
TED COW

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Frank Abdnour of Peoria, Illinois on his retirement as owner of The Spotted Cow, an iconic restaurant in my hometown.

Mr. Abdnour first opened the Spotted Cow in the early 1980's as an ice cream push-cart on the Bradley University campus. During this time, Frank became a fixture of campus life and a favorite of students in need of a frozen treat in between classes. In 1987, fueled by the American entrepreneurial spirit, Frank successfully opened a brick-and-mortar ice cream

store in Peoria Heights. Nineteen years later, Frank pursued his dream of turning the Spotted Cow into a full service restaurant at the corner of Sheridan and Glen, where it has become an institution in the Peoria community, serving the most delicious food and of course, ice cream.

The Spotted Cow is a landmark throughout Central Illinois, known for its Italian beef, burgers, salads, and, most importantly, ice cream. Frank's famous, one of a kind ice cream is made in-store with flavors that can only be found at the Spotted Cow.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Frank on a successful career as a Peoria icon, and I look forward to seeing his legacy carry on as The Spotted Cow continues to serve as a cornerstone of Peoria culture for years to come.

RECOGNIZING BELLA RUBIO FOR
HER 20 YEARS OF DEDICATED
PUBLIC SERVICE TO REAL COUN-
TY AND THE STATE OF TEXAS

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize Bella Rubio for 20 years of dedicated public service to Real County and the State of Texas.

Bella currently serves as county and district clerk for Real County, the western-most county that I represent. She is retiring but her legacy will live on for years to come in the towns of Leakey and Camp Wood in Real County.

Bella has been a dear friend to me and my staff for two decades. She is well-respected in her community and has helped me greatly in serving Real County at the federal level. For anyone in Real County needing assistance with the government, Bella has been there for them. She is dedicated, persistent, and conscientious.

Apparently, Bella has inspired a spirit of public service in her son, Lucas, who is now interning in my San Antonio district office.

Congratulations to Bella Rubio on her retirement. Everyone who knows her appreciates her many contributions to Real County. She is a patriot, a leader, and a friend to all. And for all that she deserves our heartfelt thanks.

HONORING SHERIFF BRIAN
MARTIN

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sheriff Brian Martin, whom I have named a 2016 Public Safety Hero of the Year for Lake County in California's 5th Congressional District. This award is given to exceptional members of our community who perform beyond their duty as a public servant.

A native of Lakeport, California, Sheriff Martin enlisted in the United States Army Military Police in 1992. While in the Army, Sheriff Martin was a paratrooper and was assigned to the Fort Bragg Military Police Special Reaction

Team as a team leader and sniper. Sheriff Martin then attended Modesto Junior College Police Academy in 1997 and joined the Pismo Beach Police Department where he was recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and as an Officer of the Year. Sheriff Martin has since served as Deputy Sheriff, Sergeant and Lieutenant in the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Martin has served as Sheriff for Lake County and provided valuable leadership during times of crisis. During the devastating fire season of 2015, Sheriff Martin led the evacuation of 20,000 people in response to the historic Valley Fire, which burned over 70,000 acres and destroyed nearly 2,000 structures. His actions saved countless lives in Lake County.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Sheriff Martin for his dedication to our community's safety. For this reason, it is fitting and proper that I honor him here today.

TYBEE ISLAND VETERANS CIRCLE
OF FREEDOM MEMORIAL MONU-
MENT

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Tybee Island Veterans Circle of Freedom Memorial Monument.

This monument is a tribute to all branches of the military: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Merchant Marines, and Coast Guard.

It was built for all veterans that have previously served in the United States Armed Forces as well as those currently serving.

The Veterans Circle of Freedom Memorial Monument took several years to complete, with a committee dedicated to this project beginning their work in October 2006. Tybee Island donated a piece of property in Memorial Park, and the groundbreaking was done two years later, on December 7, 2009.

I am proud to represent a district whose citizens came together to build this memorial monument. Generous donations poured in from community members, fundraisers, and even brick sales. This speaks to the proud military tradition present on Tybee Island, and Georgia's First Congressional District, more broadly. The monument is a beautiful tribute to our servicemen, and I thank the city of Tybee Island for making it happen.

IN HONOR OF ANNA MARIE SMITH

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Anna Marie Smith, a woman of strength, character and commitment to her community. Ms. Smith has been a friend, mentor and volunteer to many individuals and for organizations throughout the City of Gloucester City and the surrounding community in southern New Jersey, including myself, and it only seems fitting that we honor someone on the floor of the House of Representatives who has dedicated herself to helping others.