

Katie's Air Force career is impressive and she has received several awards and recognition for her work ethic and dedication to her patients. Her most impressive and recent award was the 2017 Air Force Medical Service Aerospace Medical Technician of the Year for Air Medical Command, coined by 19th, MDG Commander, Col. Dawn Brooks.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Airman Cogbill for this prestigious award and thank her for her selfless service to our great nation and the United States Air Force.

TRIBUTE TO THE RAILSWEST MUSEUM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the RailsWest Museum of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for maintaining 150 years of railroad history in Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County, Iowa. RailsWest Museum is located in the former depot of the Chicago, Rock Island Pacific railroads.

The RailsWest Museum is operated by the Historical Society of Pottawattamie County and the building and grounds have been renovated to preserve its rich history. The depot that houses the current museum was built in 1899, but the original depot was built in 1870. During its years in operation the depot saw thousands of local soldiers leave Council Bluffs for military duty, and it was also a welcome sight when many of them returned home after their military service. The Rock Island Line's last day of operation was March 31, 1980. Today, the museum promotes 150 years of railroad history with displays, artifacts, and exhibits.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate the RailsWest Museum for their dedicated and devoted service in preserving the railroad history of Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County. It is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the RailsWest Museum's accomplishments and in wishing the staff and volunteers nothing but the best.

CONGRATULATING KEWANEE, ILLINOIS FOR BEING NAMED A FINALIST FOR THE 2017 GOVERNOR'S HOMETOWN AWARD

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kewanee, Illinois for being named a finalist for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award due to its outstanding Step Ladder Tutoring Program.

The Step Ladder Tutoring Program targets middle school special education, borderline, and struggling general education students who need academic assistance. Certified middle school teachers serve as site coordinators for the Step Ladder Tutoring Program, while a

system of community volunteers, middle school students, high school students, college students and AmeriCorps members serve as tutors for the program. During the 2014–2015 school year, all eighth grade students receiving assistance were promoted to the ninth grade. 75 percent of the students had improved skills in math and reading, and 80 percent of the students had improved attendance rates and an overall improved attitude toward school and learning.

The generous and ambitious volunteers and leaders of the Step Ladder Tutoring Program make me especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Kewanee, Illinois for being named a finalist for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award and recognize all who organize and contribute to the Step Ladder Tutoring Program for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF MARK WHITE

HON. DAVID A. TROTT

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the retirement of Wixom, Michigan resident, Senior Inspector Mark White of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection.

We honor Mark for his years of bravery and protection of our land, sea, and air borders.

During his time at the Detroit border, Mark committed himself to the interception of contraband. He apprehended numerous pieces of drug paraphernalia and in 1995; he seized nearly \$2.7 million dollars' worth of munitions bound for illegal exportation in Operation Exodus.

His most notable act of bravery occurred in October of 1997 at the Detroit Windsor Tunnel. A gunman under the influence of drugs attempted to hijack cars at inspection lanes and shot a civilian. Mark fatally wounded the gunman and provided first aid to the injured civilian. This act of heroism earned him a number of awards, including the U.S. Customs Service Meritorious Service Award for Valor.

Since 2000, Mark has worked as the Senior Inspector at Oakland County International Airport and spends his free time as a lacrosse coach for the Walled Lake Gladiators.

After 31 years of service, Mark will retire this December, and will return to his home state of Pennsylvania with his wife and daughter.

I applaud Senior Inspector Mark White for his service to the State of Michigan.

THE LONG ARM OF CHINA: EXPORTING AUTHORITARIANISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I made the following remarks at the

hearing held by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China which I co-chair with Senator Marco Rubio:

This hearing is the second in a series looking at China's foreign influence operations and the impact on universally-recognized human rights. With the Congress and U.S. public focused on Russian influence operations, Chinese efforts have received little scrutiny and are not well understood. This must change.

Attempts by the Chinese government to guide, buy, or coerce political influence, control discussion of "sensitive" topics, and export its authoritarian practices globally are widespread and pervasive.

Long-time allies Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have been rocked by scandals involving Chinese sponsored influence operations targeting politicians, businesses, and academic institutions.

Australia in particular is in the midst of a national crisis and all like-minded democratic allies should be supporting their efforts to root out those elements intended to corrupt or coopt Australian political and academic institutions.

All countries pursue soft power initiatives to promote a "positive" global image and build goodwill, but the Chinese government's use of technology, coercion, pressure, and the promise of market access is unprecedented and poses clear challenges to the freedoms of democratic societies.

An example of Chinese rewards given to companies and individuals for abiding by the Chinese government's rules is the case of publisher Springer Nature, the world's largest academic book publisher.

Springer Nature removed more than 1,000 articles from the websites of the Journal of Chinese Political Science and International Politics in order to comply with China's censorship directives and was later "rewarded" for its censorship by signing a lucrative strategic partnership with the Chinese tech giant Tencent Holdings.

In addition to academic publishers, the Chinese government is going to school on college and universities. American institutions are being seduced by the promised infusion of much-needed wealth from China.

But one always has to pay a price—play by China's rules, don't ruffle feathers and don't discuss or write about "sensitive topics." Universities committed to academic freedom are bound to run into problems eventually.

I have held two hearings on the threat to academic freedom posed by Confucius Institutes and the creation of U.S. campuses in China.

We should all be for creative research partnerships and expanding educational opportunities for U.S. students, but not at the cost of fundamental freedoms.

I have asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) to investigate academic partnerships between the U.S. colleges and the Chinese government. The first report came out last Spring.

The GAO is now in the process of conducting investigations of Confucius Institutes. I have written to all U.S. colleges with Confucius Institutes and asked them to make their contracts public and available for public inspection.

Many foreign businesses in China have already faced similar dilemmas. Some, like Apple, which recently removed from its Chinese app store applications that help users

bypass China's "Great Firewall." The networking site LinkedIn agreed to censor content and Facebook is promising to do the same in order to get access to the Chinese market.

Chinese operations to curtail the activities of dissidents and critics of the Communist Party are also pervasive, troubling, and must be stopped. We have heard multiple stories from U.S. citizens and foreign nationals living in the U.S. about efforts to intimidate, censor, and silence them.

The case of Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui is just the latest example of egregious behavior. High-ranking Chinese security ministry officials, in the US on transit visas no less, met with Mr. Guo multiple times in order to threaten and convince him to leave the U.S.

Chinese agents have repeatedly violated U.S. sovereignty and law according to the Wall Street Journal report on the incident.

These incidents and those we will discuss today are just the tip of the iceberg.

The Commission's 2017 Annual Report contains several recommendations to counter Chinese foreign influence operations—including expanding the mandate of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) to include Chinese government media organizations and think-tanks, expanded Internet Freedom initiatives and efforts to counter Chinese propaganda and disinformation at the State Department. I encourage those interested to look at our recommendations.

As we start to grapple with the scale and scope of Chinese influence operations, we will be looking for new legislative ideas and I hope our witnesses today can provide recommendations for the Commission's action.

We must be clear from the outset that we support better relations with the people of China and the United States. The issues we are discussing here today are part of influence operations conducted by the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government.

President Xi Jinping, who has concentrated more power than any Chinese leader since Mao, is determined to make the world safe for authoritarianism. Beijing is intent on exporting its censorship regime, intimidating dissidents and their families, sanitizing history, and stifling critical discussions of its repressive policies.

These actions pose direct threats to deeply held core values and fundamental freedoms enjoyed by all democratic societies. We must find ways to effectively and resolutely push back. Doing so should be a critical national interest.

CONGRATULATING LANARK, ILLINOIS FOR BEING NAMED A PROJECT WINNER FOR THE 2017 GOVERNOR'S HOMETOWN AWARD

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lanark, Illinois for being named a project winner for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award due to its project, Workation 2016.

A group of volunteers from Lanark First Brethren Church, who were previously involved in Alaskan mission work camp pro-

grams, believed they needed a more local, neighbor-helping-neighbor type of program in Lanark. From this idea, Workation 2016 was created. This project sought requests from older residents that had small projects that they were not able to accomplish on their own. Volunteers would then complete these maintenance projects, safety upgrades, or landscaping projects at no cost to the resident. 30 different projects around town were completed by 30 volunteers. According to the volunteers, the greatest benefit of the program is the relationships that are developed and the rewarding feeling of making a home safer or more comfortable for a resident.

The hard work and generosity visible through Lanark's Workation 2016 project makes me especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Lanark, Illinois for being named a project winner for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE WALTER F. DRAG UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Walter F. Drag, who is retiring after more than three decades of judicial service to the City of Dunkirk, New York.

Judge Drag was recommended for appointment as Acting City Court Judge on January 1, 1985, and became City Court Judge in 1990. Over that time, he has heard thousands of cases and upheld the law with distinction. In addition, he maintained a private law practice until 2007, and spent several stints teaching law as a college professor.

Among Judge Drag's many accomplishments as City Court Judge is the establishment of a Treatment Court in 2002 for individuals charged with crimes related to substance abuse. In the years since then, more than seven hundred people have participated, with the majority successfully completing the treatment program.

It is a privilege to congratulate Judge Walter F. Drag on a distinguished career of service to the City of Dunkirk, and to wish him all the best in retirement. He leaves behind a legacy that will benefit the residents of his community for years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JODY REYNOLDS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Jody Reynolds of Des Moines, Iowa, for being named one of *dsm Magazine's* 2017 "Sages Over 70."

The "Sages Over 70" award honors community leaders who continue to serve as mentors and leaders when others have retired. Jody has been a tireless advocate for children her entire life. Her experience with birth com-

plications with her third child opened her eyes to what services were and were not available, and led her to advocacy. She's helped to raise \$109 million for Variety—The children's Charity over the years, and served as the first female president of Variety International. One of the many words of advice she offered to the magazine was to press forward through adversity, and to also enjoy the journey.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Jody for being named a "Sage Over 70" by *dsm Magazine*, and applaud her for her service to her community. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Jody for this outstanding achievement and in wishing her nothing but the best.

HONORING PEDDRICK M. YOUNG, SR. OF PENNSYLVANIA ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 29 YEARS OF SERVICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Peddrick M. Young, Sr., upon his retirement from almost 30 years of service with the Lower Allen Township Board of Commissioners.

First, I thank Mr. Young for his service to our Nation in the United States Marine Corps. I've long appreciated the commitment of people who devote themselves selflessly to serving our Nation.

Mr. Young also has a demonstrated record of service to our communities. He previously retired from his position as facilities manager with Commerce Bank, staff to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and staff assistant in the U.S. House to one of my predecessors, the late Congressman Bill Goodling.

Mr. Young's civic service included the Pennsylvania Crime Stoppers, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, and many others. He also served as an active member of many community service organizations.

Mr. Young's tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom he served to be the best. His legacy of service to our communities will endure.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Peddrick M. Young, Sr. on his service and wish him and his family Godspeed, great happiness and success in their future adventures.

RECOGNIZING THE LENA-WINSLOW PANTHERS FOOTBALL TEAM FOR THEIR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Lena-Winslow Panthers Football