

Dakota, and Italy. Colonel Sloma then joined the New York Army National Guard and was deployed to Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade from Syracuse in 2008. There, Colonel Sloma served as the Director of Intelligence for the Task Force Phoenix in Kandahar. Colonel Sloma later retired in 2013 with the rank of Colonel as the New York State Counterdrug Task Force Commander. Colonel Sloma had over 20 years of active duty experience and 31 years of total military experience, earning the Legion of Merit award, Bronze Star, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, three Meritorious Medals, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the Airborne Badge.

I am honored to recognize Colonel Richard J. Sloma for his service to our great nation and upon being named "2017 Pole of the Year" by the Syracuse Polish Scholarship Fund, Inc.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM H. HECHT

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and public service of William H. Hecht.

Born in Tifton, Georgia, Bill received a Master's of Divinity from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and an M.A. in philosophy from Washington University. After serving as a Lutheran pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, he became a campus pastor at the University of Oklahoma.

Bill had a long history in both Missouri state politics and on the national stage in Washington, D.C. In 1967, he became the executive director of the Missouri State Republican Party. Two years later, he served as Vice President of the American Security Council, and in 1971 he became Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the House Committee on Internal Security. After serving as an advisor and spokesman for the Reagan for President Campaign, Bill founded the respected government relations firm Hecht, Spencer and Associates in 1981.

Bill was well known for his political camaraderie and engaging conversation. He was a regular at the Capitol Hill Club, where he was respected by lawmakers for his sharp wit and political advice. Bill also took great pride in mentoring some of the brightest young minds in Washington, dedicating his time to getting to know countless young people and their families. Bill was always direct, and even in the digital media age he exemplified the value of authentic relationships and person-to-person communication.

Outside of politics, Bill was deeply dedicated to his family and friends. He was a devoted husband, proud father, and loving grandfather. Bill touched the lives of many and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

LAWRENCE ZHAO

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lawrence Zhao, who is a 7th grade student at Next Generation School in Champaign, Illinois. Lawrence will be competing in the 2017 National You Be the Chemist Challenge. The You Be the Chemist Challenge is an interactive academic contest that invites students from all around the United States in Grades 5 to 8 to explore chemistry concepts and their real-world applications.

Lawrence has advanced through many rigorous levels of competition over the past school year to qualify for the national competition, which is held Monday, June 19th, in Washington D.C. The competition starts out at a local level, where students participate individually, with first the distribution of a quiz that relates to chemistry and those who pass it are eligible to participate in the local contest. The local contest consists of a quiz-bowl style format containing several rounds of multiple choice questions.

Lawrence won the local challenge and had the opportunity to compete in a similar style state-wide competition. Having received the highest score at the state challenge, he advanced to the national challenge. I applaud Lawrence Zhao for his exemplary performance thus far, and I wish him the best of luck in not only the challenge, but all his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, due to a personal conflict, I was unable to make votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 300, and YEA on Roll Call No. 301.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes Monday, June 12, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call votes 300 and 301.

HONORING THE WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Women's Enterprise Development

Center (WEDC) based in Westchester County, New York, which is celebrating its 20th Anniversary on June 15th.

Since its establishment in White Plains, NY, in 1997, the Women's Enterprise Development Center has helped hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs start and grow their own businesses by providing them with training, advisory services, and access to capital. The more than 1600 graduates of WEDC's 60-hour Entrepreneurship Program have achieved business success in many fields ranging from accounting to moving organic food products to construction and landscaping to senior services. WEDC's clients include women who lack access to traditional business and financial resources. In 2015 alone, WEDC provided 1,666 motivated clients with the tools they needed to succeed.

The accomplishments of WEDC have not gone unnoticed, and over the years it has gained support from the federal, state and local governments as well as major corporations such as IBM, M&T Bank, MasterCard, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, Verizon, and Wells Fargo. WEDC was recently designated as the New York Empire State Development Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) Center for the Mid-Hudson Valley, and its work has been recognized by the County governments of Westchester and Rockland as well as the U.S. Small Business Administration, which named it a Women's Business Center in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have worked for the last two decades with Anne Janiak, a founder and the CEO of WEDC, and her team to support entrepreneurial women in New York's Hudson Valley. I urge my colleagues to join me in applauding their 20 years of service to the Lower Hudson Valley and congratulate them as they celebrate this important anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes No. 300 and No. 301. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on rollcall No. 300, and yea on rollcall No. 301.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the District of Columbia National Park Service Improvement Act, a bill that would clarify that D.C. has the authority to enter into cooperative management agreements (CMAs) with the National Park Service (NPS) to maintain and invest in NPS properties in the city. NPS is the steward for many of our country's most beautiful natural wonders, but they are uniquely responsible for most of the small, urban parks here in the District. Given NPS's

limited budget and resources, we should be encouraging local jurisdictions to work collaboratively with NPS to make sure that our national parks are being cared for. States have already explored these opportunities, but my bill would remove any doubt that the District has the same authority as the states to enter into CMAs with NPS.

The city already has plans to enter into a CMA with NPS to take over operational jurisdiction of Franklin Park, an NPS park in downtown D.C. that has seen better days. The city plans to work with the Downtown Business Improvement District to transform the park to its former glory by ensuring regular maintenance and providing amenities such as food, gardens, and other services. As the city's downtown core has grown to include more housing, businesses, and workers, the need for green space has also grown. The city's plans for Franklin Park are a model for what can be done when local jurisdictions get creative about protecting and improving our nation's parks.

My bill is uncontroversial and simply clarifies that the District can provide financial support to NPS in order to maintain their property. This is a win for the city, the federal government, and all those who live in or visit the District and enjoy our NPS parks. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING PAUL FLETCHER

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Paul Fletcher, a Naval Academy Appointee from Colorado's Fourth Congressional District. I believe our greatest assets are America's brave men and women in uniform. Paul is making an incredible sacrifice for our country and deserves our utmost support for his service. It is with great pleasure that I give him my endorsement to attend this prestigious institution.

Paul has demonstrated excellent leadership and service, acting as the Founder and President of several school clubs, in addition to serving as captain of his school's Wrestling Team. His exceptional athletic ability has been proven by his performance in wrestling and shooting sports. Paul was also a member of his high school's chapter of the National Honor Society in which he served as the chapter's Secretary.

Our nation owes no greater debt of gratitude than to those who fight to protect our freedom and liberty. I commend Paul and his family for their commitment. On behalf of the 4th Congressional District of Colorado, I extend my best wishes to Paul.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Paul Fletcher as an appointee to the Naval Academy for his commitment to protect and serve our nation.

CONGRATULATING JACIE KERSH
FOR BEING NAMED THE WINNER
OF DISTRICT 206'S GREAT
GALESBURG SHAKE

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jacie Kersh, a Galesburg High School senior, for being named the winner of District 205's Great Galesburg Shake.

The Great Galesburg Shake is an opportunity for young adults to demonstrate their manners and conversational skills in a professional environment. Thanks to this program, Jacie was able to learn important life skills such as engagement, confidence, a firm handshake, manners and conversational skills that will allow her to grow, succeed and become a leader in our community. I would like to recognize Jacie for standing out among the 120 students who participated, and for her tremendous composure which will serve her well in her bright future. I am proud to see such accomplished young individuals representing our community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Jacie Kersh on her incredible accomplishment, and I join the rest of our community in wishing her every success in the future.

THE MEMBERS OF CONNECTICUT'S
HOUSE DELEGATION HONOR
RUDY BROWN ON THE OCCASION
OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today and join my Connecticut colleagues, JOHN LARSON, JOE COURTNEY, JIM HIMES, and ELIZABETH ESTY, in extending our deepest thanks and sincere appreciation to Rudy Brown, who, after a thirty-one year career with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will be retiring later this year. As the government liaison for EPA's Region 1 office, each of us has had the opportunity to work with Rudy on a variety of projects over the years and owe him a great debt of gratitude for all of his good work.

In our roles as Members of Congress, we and our staffs deal with a number of federal agencies while working on behalf of our constituents and yet it is rare to find someone like Rudy. His dedication and commitment to his work and helping to fulfill the mission of the EPA are second to none. He has met every challenge with a willingness to roll-up his sleeves and see what could be done, and always with a smile.

In a career that has spanned over three decades, and with responsibilities to the six New-England States that make up EPA's Region 1, Rudy has spent countless hours ensuring that Congressional members and their staffs had the information and background they needed to address issues of concern to their residents. From large Superfund projects and issues concerning the Long Island Sound,

to cornfields redevelopment and grant announcements, we and our staffs have always known that we could count on Rudy's guidance and have never doubted that he would provide us with the best possible information, even if it was not necessarily what we were hoping to hear—that is an invaluable resource when it comes to constituent service.

As he comes up on his retirement, we stand together to say thank you to Rudy Brown—thank you for your thirty-one years of federal service, thank you for your unwavering commitment, and thank you for making the time to ensure that we have been able to serve our constituents in the best possible way. We have no doubt that his wife and daughters are looking forward to spending more time with him and wish him all the best for many more years of health and happiness as he enjoys this next chapter of his life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, on June 12, 2017, I missed two votes due to a dental emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted: rollcall No. 300—Yea, and rollcall No. 301—yea.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND DR.
LOUIS E. SANDERS

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Reverend Dr. Louis E. Sanders, who is retiring this month from his position as Pastor of the St. Charles A.M.E. Zion Church in Sparkill, Rockland County, NY, in my District.

Throughout his life, Reverend Sanders has been deeply involved in the church and the philosophical questions surrounding religion. As a young student in North Carolina, he was active in the Mt. Hebron A.M.E. Zion Church before earning a BS degree in Social Science from North Carolina A&T, and MA and MS degrees from the City University of New York. He also received a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary and a Doctorate of Humane Letters from St. Thomas Aquinas College in Sparkill, NY.

For the past 49 years, Reverend Sanders has served the people of New York's Lower Hudson Valley. In 1968, he was hired by the Tuckahoe Board of Education in Eastchester, New York, where he taught Social Studies for 30 years. He began his church ministry in 1970 and preached at Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in Mount Vernon, NY. He would go on to serve various roles at churches throughout the Hudson Valley before being appointed Pastor of the St. Charles A.M.E. Zion Church in 1981.

As Pastor, Reverend Sanders has increased church membership tenfold and extended its impact far into the community. He began a program to aid homeless children from Harlem in developing positive life attitudes, an SAT tutorial program for minority students, and an