

Please contact Tyler Ray, Director of Policy and Advocacy with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

TYLER RAY,
Director of Policy and Advocacy.

NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION,
Lowell, MI, May 31, 2018.

RE H.R. 1026.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: We urge your support for the passage of H.R. 1026, the North Country National Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act, which is scheduled for a floor vote in the House on June 5th.

We ask this on behalf of:

Local communities in northeastern Minnesota and Vermont directly affected by this bill, in order that they enjoy the many economic, recreational and quality of life benefits through this designation of a National Scenic Trail passing through their communities.

The North Country Trail community—now representing over 50,000 hikers, trail builders and trail maintainers—who have worked tirelessly for over 15 years to finally see this legislation passed.

The hundreds of thousands of American families who use the North Country National Scenic Trail to enjoy the many health, recreational and family values benefits of hiking on a National Trail, and being connected with others who call America's northern heartlands home.

This simple bill corrects an oversight perpetuated in the original 1980 authorization of the North Country National Scenic Trail, adjusts its authorized mileage to the more accurate number and in fact saves money by replacing the far more costly original route in Minnesota that required traversing wetlands with world class trail that is mostly already constructed.

Using a proven approach based on a public/private partnership that leverages the public benefit with both sweat equity and private funding, our community needs your support of H.R. 1026 to fully realize the public benefit envisioned by Congress for the North Country National Scenic Trail. We hope we can count on you.

Sincerely,

ANDREA KETCHMARK,
Executive Director.

FALLEN WARRIORS MEMORIAL GALLERY

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on the wall in my offices in Washington and Texas, hang pictures, faces, of fallen Texas warriors. These pictures remind all those who visit that freedom comes with a price. One man in southeastern Texas is commemorating the memory of these brave men and women in a unique way.

Ken Pridgeon has a deep respect for the military. He served ten years in the Air Force as an electronics technician, until retiring from the military with a profound appreciation for the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform.

During his time in the service, he developed his talents as an artist, transforming Sepia tone family pictures into color photos during deployments for his brothers-in-arms. During a time when he was stationed in Florida, he was

even lucky enough to take an art class run by American legend Norman Rockwell.

His artistic abilities led to him taking a job as a billboard artist in the Houston area after his retirement from the Air Force. Suspended 65 feet above the road, Ken painted advertisements on roadside billboards for decades. It was perilous work, but Pridgeon became a master of his profession.

Ken's high esteem for America's servicemen never left him and eventually inspired him to pursue a new project that would combine this respect with his artistic side. Compelled to commemorate the sacrifice of fallen U.S. members of the military in Iraq and Afghanistan, he began to paint portraits of Texans who gave their lives in defense of our country in those conflicts.

What started as merely a side project turned into a full-time calling, as Ken began expanding his collection to servicemen outside of Texas. To date, he has painted 200 portraits of fallen American warriors. He donates a print of each portrait to the family of the portrayed, and he tries to consult them in creating each piece so that he can add personal touches to the painting. Ken often spends up to fourteen hours a day painting, beginning before the crack of dawn and ending well after sundown.

Ken began displaying these portraits in a gallery in Baytown, Texas, his hometown. Recently, he relocated his works to the newly opened Fallen Warriors Memorial gallery on Cutten Road in Houston. These portraits complement the nearby Fallen Warriors Memorial, and now visitors can come face to face with some of the fallen servicemen honored by the memorial in Ken's gallery.

Mr. Speaker, General George Patton once said, "While we mourn the loss of such men, we should thank God that such men ever lived." Ken Pridgeon's paintings provide a fitting tribute to our country's fallen warriors, a rare breed of Americans.

And that's just the way it is.

IN HONOR OF COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR MATTHEW T. BRADY

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the service of my personal hero, my brother, Command Sergeant Major Matthew Thomas Brady.

Over thirty-five years ago, Matt began his military career when he enlisted in the U.S. Army National Guard. After completing his basic training at Fort Dix in New Jersey, Matt continued to expand his skill set with Combat Engineer Training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and Combat Medic Training at Fort Sam Houston in the great state of Texas.

While serving in the National Guard, Matt earned his Bachelor's Degree, and upon his graduation, he began his active-duty military service in the U.S. Army. Always willing to go where there was a need, Matt's service has taken him across the United States and around the world, from postings in Colorado and Alaska to South Korea and Germany. Matt has served with valor and distinction in multiple conflicts, including Operation Desert

Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Matt's distinguished service has not gone unrecognized. He has earned countless awards and honors, including the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star with an oak leaf cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, the Operation Iraqi Freedom Medal with two Bronze Stars, and many others.

Our mother, Nancy, inspired us to have faith, always be optimistic, and to give back. Matt turned this advice into a creed that he followed throughout his storied military career. From his time as a medic to his current role as Command Sergeant Major of the Regional Health Command—Atlantic, Matt has spent most of his career managing healthcare systems to care for our wounded warriors and treat our active duty service members.

After thirty-six years of military service, Matt will begin his hard-earned and well-deserved retirement on September 30, 2018. My brother represents the best of what this country has to offer. Matt; his wife, Christina; and their two children, Matthew and Caitlin, have given so much over the years, and I could not be prouder to pay tribute to my little brother—my hero—and honor his decades of selfless, dedicated service to our family and our country.

INTRODUCING THE STUDENTS HELPING YOUNG STUDENTS ACT

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to re-introduce the Students Helping Young Students Act. This important and bipartisan legislation would provide an additional pathway to enable students to work their way through college, while at the same time enhancing the afterschool opportunities of their younger peers.

The Students Helping Young Students Act would incorporate work at afterschool programs into the Federal Work-Study program. Encouraging students enrolled in higher education to work with vulnerable younger students is a win-win, expanding opportunities for students at colleges and universities to participate in afterschool programs for at-risk youth. The bill creates new paths to achievement and opportunities for students at all levels, a commonsense way to improve our nation's education system.

The hours between 3 p.m.—7 p.m., when children are out of school but parents are not yet home from work, can be a critical time for children, families, and communities. Mentoring and afterschool programs can play a key role in filling this gap. Unfortunately, too few at-risk students have the opportunity to participate in these programs. While not a panacea, afterschool and mentoring programs have been associated with improved educational outcomes, reduced negative behaviors, increased school attendance, and improved social and emotional development.

At the same time, as college costs continue to rise, the Federal Work-Study program provides a key source of financing for students to

attain a degree. Since 2000, colleges and universities participating in Work-Study have been required to use a portion of their federal funding allocation for community service jobs. While a variety of community service opportunities can meet this requirement, many effective afterschool programs are not eligible. Under this legislation, these programs would become eligible for this existing allocation, encouraging students to participate in the programs.

By making it easier for college students to help their younger peers through afterschool programs, students of all ages—as well as the schools they attend—come out ahead. I urge Congress to pass the Students Helping Young Students Act.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE GANNENMONO

HON. COLLEEN HANABUSA

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the gannenmono, the first Japanese immigrants to Hawaii.

On June 20, 1868, the first Japanese immigrants to Hawaii landed in Honolulu harbor. The Hawaiian government had asked its consul in Japan, Eugene Van Reed, to recruit contract laborers for work in the sugar cane fields. Though the original intent was to gather 350 immigrants, Van Reed succeeded in recruiting only 148 immigrants, of which 6 were women. These became the original gannenmono, or “first year people,” so named because they emigrated on the first year of the Meiji Emperor’s reign. Van Reed had secured permission from the Shogunate government for the gannenmono to depart, but the new Meiji government declined to reconfirm these passports, forcing the migrants to depart illegally.

Work and life on the plantations proved to be difficult for the gannenmono. Many of them were craftsmen and displaced samurai unfamiliar with agricultural labor. Conditions on the plantations were also harsh. Work was both tedious and monotonous, living conditions were poor, the pay was hardly sufficient and disproportionately lower for Japanese workers than for laborers of other ethnic groups, and the plantation overseers were often physically abusive. When the Japanese government heard that its citizens were being mistreated, it recalled the gannenmono. However, about 100 of the original group chose to remain in Hawaii, where they settled and intermarried with the locals. For the next seventeen years, the Japanese government refused to endorse any policy of organized immigration to Hawaii.

However, the need for cheap labor on the sugar cane plantations and the declining Native Hawaiian population made the need for Japanese immigrants ever more urgent. In 1881, King David Kalakaua visited Japan during his world tour and made an appeal to the Meiji Emperor for Japanese immigration to Hawaii and closer ties between the two countries. Negotiations over immigration led the Hawaiian government to promise increased wages and improved working conditions for Japanese

workers in future contracts. The first contract labor immigrants from Japan arrived in Hawaii in 1885, beginning a new wave of Japanese immigration. In 1884, the Kingdom of Hawaii reported 116 residents of Japanese descent in its census. By 1900, the Territory of Hawaii recorded over 60,000 people of Japanese descent, most of whom were unskilled male laborers.

Unfortunately, the arrival of Japanese immigrants triggered xenophobic sentiments among those concerned with labor competition and racial purity, leading the United States federal government to restrict Japanese immigration. These nativist movements were strongest in California, where many Japanese and Asian immigrants settled. Under the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907, the United States promised not to impose any immigration restrictions if Japan ended its emigration programs. However, the Immigration Acts of 1924 codified the suspension of Japanese immigration by ending immigration of all aliens ineligible for citizenship—a de facto ban on Asian immigration not lifted until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.

Immigration was just the first of many challenges Japanese Americans faced. The Japanese immigrants had difficulty integrating into local communities due to persistent prejudice and systemic hostility by neighbors and local, state, and federal governments. During the Second World War, over a hundred thousand Japanese Americans, the majority of whom were United States citizens, were forcibly relocated and incarcerated due largely to the mistaken notion that they would be more loyal to Japan than to the United States. Even today, stereotypes of Japanese Americans as perpetual aliens persist, even if the United States is the only country most Japanese Americans have ever known and called home.

This anniversary of the arrival of the gannenmono reminds us of the difficult histories of Japanese American immigration and, in a broader sense, the immigration of other racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the United States. In examining our public discourse on immigration today, we see that we do not live in a unique moment in our country’s history. Too often in our past have we closed our doors to those seeking a better future in the United States. Even after settling here, these immigrants often face prejudice and other challenges in integration. Yet, through their many sacrifices, perseverance, and resilience, through their hard work to earn their stead in America, they became Americans. Ours is a country not of a single race, ethnicity, language, or culture, but of shared values and beliefs. We are united by our common faith in democracy, confidence in equal justice, and aspirations for a better future. No one today can dispute the positive impact the Japanese American community has made on American life and society.

A hundred and fifty years ago, a small ship of immigrants seeking new lives set sail from their homes for a far-away land. For the vast majority of us in the United States today, this is how our stories and those of our ancestors begin. By learning and remembering the histories of Japanese Americans and other communities that immigrated to this country, we become wiser in crafting our national attitudes and policies towards those seeking better futures for themselves and their families in America today. We must be an example for

future generations to act wisely and honorably, informed by our own history as a country. Mr. Speaker, I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring the gannenmono and remembering their story today.

MEMORIAL PARK: A HAVEN FOR HOUSTON

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, lately Houston has become synonymous with flooding, but seven years ago a devastating drought caused our beloved Memorial Park to lose nearly 80 percent of its thousands of trees.

Maybe you’ve never heard of Memorial Park. It is Houston’s largest public space; its haven in the heart of Houston—and almost double the size of New York’s Central Park. Daily commuters drive through winding, wooded roads, free of billboards and businesses, as they head to work. The park’s 600-acre urban wilderness is one of the largest centrally located urban forests in the country. Memorial Park is also remarkable because it is home to Camp Logan, the only former World War I training camp site in the United States that is not completely developed.

The 2011 drought underscored the need to fast-track Memorial Park’s Master Plan to create the best urban park in America. This month Houston’s Kinder Foundation granted \$70 million to this effort and energized the park’s public and private partners to invest up to \$205 million more. These efforts will take the Master Plan from proposal to reality in just 10 years and enhance and protect Memorial Park for today and for generations to come.

The restoration will be directed by the Memorial Park Conservancy, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and Uptown Development Authority. These partners have set new standards in green space planning and public-private funding partnerships.

Kinder Foundation’s inspiring public-private partnerships have changed Houston’s color palette from gray to green. Some of their landmark successes include Discovery Green, Buffalo Bayou Park, and Bayou Greenways 2020. Their legacy continues with Memorial Park. Kinder Foundation chairman Rich Kinder said Memorial Park will now reach its full potential and include a signature land bridge, a restored prairie ecology, natural storm drainage and retention systems, in addition to adding over 30 miles of trails for hiking, biking, running, and equestrian use.

Many joggers, runners and walkers hit the park’s trail daily to make the nearly three-mile loop. I know this park well, Mr. Speaker. In my past life as a criminal court judge, I took to the gravel trail for my daily run, as later did my kids. I can’t tell you how many miles I’ve run in Memorial Park, but I can tell you it’s no overstatement to say the Kinder’s grant along with the day-to-day work by its partners will save this cherished haven in Houston.

And that’s just the way it is.