

Shelly Knapp served as a YRRP Instructor/Facilitator and Army Family Advisory Panel Member where she trained and facilitated courses and seminars, and mentored Army Reserve Soldiers and family members at numerous YRRP events that occurred before, during and after mobilization. This service represents 429 volunteer hours.

Shelly Knapp stepped up to coordinate the 63d RD's Army Reserve Minuteman ROTC Scholarship efforts for deserving USAR Soldiers and high school recipients on behalf of the 63d RD CG. Five candidates were awarded four-year or three-year Army ROTC scholarships. This service represents 236 volunteer hours.

While at the 63d Readiness Division, Mrs. Knapp was selected by Army Reserve Family Programs to attend and obtain certification as a Department of Defense Master Trainer—one of the select few chosen in the Army Reserve. This represents 296 volunteer hours.

Mrs. Knapp is currently employed as a Budget Analyst at the Veterans Administration Palo Alto Cooperative Studies Medical Research Program in Mountain View, California.

During her time at the VA she volunteered as an artist/vocalist in the VA Palo Alto Arts Session Band, performing at ten VA-sponsored events and recording an original song, 'America Begins', by a fellow VA Arts Band Veteran that won the Bay Area VA Creative Arts Competition. She also volunteers as a Wellness Ambassador and Employee Engagement Committee Leader where she has led efforts for a Wellness Fair attended by over 100 VA employees from multiple Bay Area VA campuses. She also displayed many of her own paintings and drawings for the Women Veteran in Arts Program. This represents 203 volunteer hours.

During the five year period from 2015 to 2020 while Mrs. Knapp was associated with the 63d RD, she volunteered over 1,500 hours while maintaining full-time employment at the VA. She also graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Golden Gate University during this period, completing 65 credit hours in 22 months—a long-time goal accomplished after attending five universities previously due to 20-plus military relocations and multiple deployments during her spouse's military career.

In 2014, prior to her family's final military assignment to the 63d RD, Mrs. Knapp served in a part-time paid position as Program Administrator for Texas A&M University's 4-H 'Operation Military Kids' program where she managed a federal grant that directly assisted Guard and Reserve Families of all service branches at two military installations in Texas. Her efforts included coordinating community partner efforts at family readiness events, organizing multiple volunteer opportunities for military families, conducting cooking classes for military children and families, and briefing community officials on the challenges military families face.

In previous roles as FRG Leader, Co-Leader and Treasurer over a period of 20 years, she accumulated over 3,000 volunteer hours and was instrumental in standing up Family Readiness Groups, training new volunteers, organizing and executing small and large-scale events and managing non-appropriated funds, demonstrating her adeptness at mentoring new volunteers and FRGs and re-energizing dormant ones. She has opened her

home for years to military families for Thanksgiving and she and her family have long been active in Army and Army Reserve Family Programs, including her daughter Katie serving two terms on the National Army Reserve Teen Panel. Her volunteer service to Soldiers and Army Reserve Families culminated in 2012 with her FRG being awarded the DoD Family Readiness Group of the Year—Army Reserve while she served as Co-Leader of the 79th Theater Sustainment Command FRG.

Mrs. Knapp's unmatched energy, excellent communication skills and devotion to serve and assist Army Soldiers, Families and Veterans has contributed greatly to individual, unit and family morale and readiness in every formation and location she has served over 26 years, including assignments in five states and three overseas locations. Her service in the Marines for four years on active duty (1989 to 93) laid the foundation for her volunteer service.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring and thanking Shelly Knapp, a force for good in military families, for her extraordinary service to our country. She has set the 'gold standard' with her thousands of volunteer hours, touched thousands of lives and strengthened our country immeasurably with her devotion to service.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF BONITA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. JOSH HARDER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. HARDER of California. Madam Speaker, today, I am proud to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of Bonita Elementary School in Crows Landing, California. This campus and its educators have continued to provide amazing opportunities to students here in the Central Valley and should be applauded for the valuable work they have provided to our community over that past 150 years.

Bonita Elementary School is one of six traditional schools in the Newman Crows Landing Unified School District. While it is the oldest campus in the district, it is also the smallest of four elementary schools creating a tight knit community where parents and teachers can work together to provide a quality education for their students. The continued achievements of this campus should be credited to the teachers, administrators, and staff who are dedicated to ensuring the academic success of every student and to provide a safe and comprehensive educational experience.

I am honored to recognize the hard work and dedication of everyone who has contributed to the success of Bonita Elementary School over the past 150 years. I know we can look forward to more success for this campus and their students for years to come.

EMERGENCY EDUCATIONAL CONNECTIONS ACT, H.R. 6563

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, I rise in the midst of a global health emergency that has re-calibrated each of our lives, including for over 55 million students across the country who are now forced into remote learning. To help combat the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), over 124,000 public and private schools have closed across the country—many for the remainder of the academic year. These actions have laid bare to the American people the critical role internet access plays in our society.

Before the pandemic struck, there were nearly 12 million students who were part of the so-called "homework gap"—meaning they lacked internet access at home to complete their homework. This is a problem because as many as 7 in 10 teachers assign homework that requires internet access. To keep up with their connected peers, homework gap students had to travel to a library or other public places to use its free Wi-Fi—or risk not completing their homework and falling further behind academically.

Fast forward to now, with millions of people sheltering at home, students are participating in remote learning that includes class meetings, explanations of new content, virtual field trips, homework, and learning exercises. As such, for those students without internet, this gap seems more like a chasm. Students without internet service will fall further behind as students with internet service at home can continue advancing in their studies. Whether they live in urban centers, suburbs, or exurbs, or small communities in rural America, all students require internet connectivity to succeed during this pandemic.

That is why I introduced the Emergency Educational Connections Act, H.R. 6563 which would provide \$2 billion to the FCC's E-Rate program to ensure students can continue their studies from the safety and comfort of their homes. Through this program, the FCC can distribute funds to schools and libraries, including Tribal schools and libraries, relatively quickly. We do not have to reinvent any processes to help students.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that the Emergency Educational Connections Act, H.R. 6563 be included in the next coronavirus relief package to ensure no child loses out on an education because they lack internet access at home. I urge all my colleagues to support it and see it signed into law. We must finally see an end to the digital divide.

RECOGNIZING BLAUM BROS. DISTILLERY FOR CHANGING THEIR PRODUCTION TO HAND SANITIZER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Matt and Mike Blaum for transforming

their liquor distillery during the COVID-19 pandemic to make hand sanitizer, to be distributed at no cost to the community. These Hometown Heroes are being recognized for utilizing their business to contribute to those in need during these trying times.

Blaum Bros. Distillery was founded in 2013 by Matt and Mike with the hope of distilling beverages they could enjoy together. Since March 2020, they have pivoted their purpose to make hand sanitizer and even have a button on their website for hand sanitizer requests. I commend them for taking action during a pandemic, when supplies are in short supply. I thank them for their kindness and generosity to the Moline community.

It is because of leaders such as Matt and Mike Blaum that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally recognize the Blaum Brothers and their Distillery for their kindness and generosity.

ONGOING PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY IN EUROPE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. HUDSON. Madam Speaker, I wish to provide an update to my colleagues on the continuing activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—the OSCE PA—during these challenging times.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic challenges the OSCE PA to find new ways to conduct its work. International relations require engagement on both a bilateral level and on multilateral levels as well. It is likely that all gatherings of the OSCE PA this year will be online, through video conferences.

For example, last week the OSCE PA held a webinar on economic security and the COVID-19 pandemic. I participated in the event and spoke specifically on energy security needs, pointing to the continuation of Russia's predatory natural gas supply practices which seek to exert geopolitical influence. Europe needs a diversified supply for its energy sources. Too much reliance on Russia for energy can lead to market distortions and encourage corrupt practices, while alternative sources increase security and benefit the average consumer.

Last week a video session was held of those parliamentarians who comprise the leadership of the OSCE PA, which includes Senator ROGER WICKER of Mississippi and myself. Guest speakers included the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, as well as the EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarcic of Slovenia. As Chairman of the First Committee, I made clear that the committee will not waver from its crucial role in defending Helsinki Principles where they are most threatened. In this regard, I noted the public statement I made last week, jointly with my fellow committee officers from the parliaments of Romania and Lithuania, on the third anniversary of the tragic death of Joseph Stone, an American working on the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Senator BEN CARDIN of Maryland spoke at this leadership session as the Assembly's

Special Representative on anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance. He noted that disadvantaged immigrant and minority communities are made even more vulnerable by the pandemic, and that parliamentarians have an important role in responding to this problem during states of emergency. Our colleague from New Jersey, Mr. CHRIS SMITH, also spoke in his capacity as the Special Representative of the OSCE PA on Human Trafficking Issues. He stressed how current circumstances make those vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, including children, even more vulnerable. Coronavirus and its butterfly effect have also rendered non-government organizations less effective in their mission to help trafficking victims by operating shelters, care and counseling.

To conclude Madam Speaker, I want to stress that, while we may need to focus our efforts on fighting this pandemic at home, we need to work with our partners abroad to eliminate a virus that knows no borders and from which we ultimately can never fully isolate ourselves. Working with our partners and allies across the globe is the interest of our constituents here at home. I also want to stress that the pandemic has not resolved earlier challenges but in many cases made them worse. We need the capacity to address a wide range of ongoing issues, and the OSCE PA is a valued venue for doing that on a multilateral level.

Madam Speaker, please join me today in recognizing the importance of these continued discussions with our European allies and friends.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION MONTH

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor every teacher, administrator, employee and contractor in all San Mateo County school districts who together prepare our children to grow into educated and contributing members of our society. May is National Teacher Appreciation Month, but they deserve our gratitude and admiration every day. They rise to the occasion even under the most challenging and unprecedented conditions they are facing in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Working in education is more than a job, it's a passion. The dedication to guide and nurture our future generations is based on selflessness and wanting to create a better world. The impact an educator has on children is profound. The philosopher Plato once said: "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life"—wise and true words.

Who doesn't have memories of a teacher whose words and actions will stay with them for the rest of their lives? My middle school teacher at South San Francisco's Parkway, Mr. Jex, called me "chief" when he appointed me editor in chief of the school newspaper. Mr. Jex gave me confidence and a purpose. He helped determine the direction of my life . . . like all teachers do.

Educators spend countless hours and their own money to prepare students for the future.

They buy pencils, crayons, paper, snacks, toothbrushes, whatever it is the child is lacking. In the United States, we don't pay them anywhere near their value. They deserve more compensation and more recognition for the tireless and essential work they do, but it's not in the nature of teachers to give up and walk away, not even in the face of COVID-19.

The outbreak of the contagious novel coronavirus forced school and health officers to close schools on March 16th to prevent the spread of the disease. It did not shutter education, though. San Mateo County teachers, administrators, kitchen workers and custodians rose to the occasion. They created distance learning, providing students with Chromebooks and hotspots to connect in virtual classrooms. They designed innovative curricula to ensure engaging learning opportunities. Understanding the dependence of many students on breakfast and lunch, they continued to prepare and distribute meals. Striving to prevent the achievement gap from deepening, they provided additional support, tutoring and counseling for students and their families.

Facing unprecedented challenges, everyone from superintendents to principals to teachers to administrators to custodians came together and contributed. Now, everyone continues to adjust to the new reality. Schools will remain closed for the remainder of the academic year.

Madam Speaker, let us rise to acknowledge the remarkable resilience of our educators and to redouble our efforts as Members of Congress and as members of society to support them. They have our children's backs, so we must have theirs. To invoke Plato again, he said: "No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end of their nature and education."

THANKING THE PEORIA MEDICAL SOCIETY ALLIANCE FOR 80 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEORIA COMMUNITY

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Peoria Medical Society Alliance (PMSA) for its 80 years of service to the Peoria community. The PMSA is a not-for-profit organization that works with the Peoria Medical Society to promote the health, the education, and the quality of life for the people of the Peoria community.

Partnered with the Peoria Medical Society, the PMSA has several committees dedicated to important causes in the community. For example, in their Adopt-A-School program they adopted Whittier Grade School to tutor kindergartners and first graders. They also host game nights and parties for senior homes, such as Heddington Oaks. PMSA even provides scholarships for students attending college in health-related fields. I commend the PMSA for its contributions to the local Peoria community and I thank them for their kindness and generosity.

It is because of leaders such as the PMSA that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally recognize the Peoria Medical Society Alliance for its great work in the Peoria community.