wish him continued health, safety, and success.

IN RECOGNITION OF LANDON BAILEY

HON. LAUREN UNDERWOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Landon Bailey for his service in my office in Washington, D.C.

Landon joined our office as scheduler at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. As our office transitioned to maximum telework status in March 2020 and we learned to serve Illinois' 14th District remotely, Landon played an integral role. He enthusiastically rolled up his sleeves and demonstrated patience, perseverance, and dedication to learning a new job, integrating with a new team, and serving the people of the 14th District of Illinois, all without the benefit of ever working in a physical office environment or meeting his colleagues face-to-face. While taking on that particular challenge is an experience shared by more than a few Americans during the coronavirus pandemic, the grace, humor, and kindness with which he approached the challenge sets him apart.

During his tenure, Landon shifted our external and internal scheduling processes from a primarily in-person operation to a primarily virtual operation. He learned and taught others how to Zoom, use Teams, and participate in hearings via WebEx—and often navigate multiple virtual events simultaneously. He liaised with hundreds of constituents and made sure each of them was able to connect with our office. Without his efforts, our District would not have been as well-served during this challenging time.

Landon's collegiality, get-it-done attitude, and grace under pressure were invaluable assets as we worked to keep our community safe, healthy, and informed in this unprecedented year.

Prior to joining my staff, Landon earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Delaware State University, where he was a member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. and The Men of Color Alliance. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration from Wilmington University. I am grateful he chose to continue his career in public service by joining my office. Our office will miss his daily updates on our morning calls, his unfailing love for Delaware State University, and his ability to narrate an impromptu team-building holiday fashion show like a pro.

Madam Speaker, I would like to formally thank Landon Bailey for his service to my office, to Illinois's 14th Congressional District, and to our country.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. DEBRA A. DRAPER

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to honor the service of Dr. Debra A. Draper, a Director of Health Care at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), on the occasion of her upcoming retirement. Dr. Draper spent 14 years of her career at GAO, primarily overseeing evaluations of federal health care services for veterans and military servicemembers. Dr. Draper brought with her to GAO more than 25 years of experience in health care administration, health services research, and health care consulting, as well as a Ph.D. in Health Services Organization and Research.

As she retires, Dr. Draper will leave a lasting legacy—not only at GAO, but at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and here in Congress. As Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am especially grateful for the work Dr. Draper and her teams have done for this committee. As a Director at GAO, Dr. Draper has issued at least 80 written products, more than 45 of which were reports or written testimony prepared at the request or mandate of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Dr. Draper and her teams have made hundreds of recommendations to improve the delivery of health care services to our nation's veterans, the majority of which have been implemented.

Since 2010, Dr. Draper has testified at 12 hearings convened by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs or its Subcommittees. She has been a trusted voice and provided meaningful insights on numerous issues within the Committee's jurisdiction. However, Dr. Draper's most significant contributions as a hearing witness have been on the topic of veterans' wait times for appointments at VA medical facilities, an issue that captured nationwide media attention in 2014. Dr. Draper's testimony and subsequent reports on this topic has been invaluable to helping the Committee understand VA's appointment scheduling processes and the lack of transparency in VA's reported wait times. Dr. Draper's body of work will continue to guide the Committee's oversight in this area, even after her retirement.

In 2015, GAO added VA health care to its biennial High Risk List, which focuses attention on federal programs and government operations that are most vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. In designating VA health care as a high-risk area, GAO identified five areas of concern: (1) ambiguous policies and inconsistent processes; (2) inadequate oversight and accountability; (3) information technology challenges; (4) inadequate training for VA staff; and (5) unclear resource needs and allocation priorities. Since 2015, amid significant leadership instability at VA, Dr. Draper has diligently monitored the Department's response to GAO's high-risk designation, engaging in countless meetings with VA officials and providing ongoing feedback on the Department's plans for addressing GAO's five areas of concern. While VA still has a significant amount of work to do to meet GAO's criteria for removal from the High Risk List, Dr. Draper has established a solid foundation for evaluating VA's future progress.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Draper for her many years of dedicated GAO service, which will have a lasting impact on veterans, VA, and the Congress. Throughout her time at GAO, she has been a highly respected leader, supervisor, mentor, and colleague, and she will undoubtedly be missed by those who have worked closely with her. My House Committee on Veterans' Affairs colleagues and I, and our staffs, congratulate her and wish her well in her richly deserved retirement.

H.R. 210, RURAL STEM EDUCATION RESEARCH ACT

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was proud to join Ranking Member Lucas in introducing his Rural STEM Education Research Act. Access to high-quality STEM education has too long been place-based. For students who grow up in rural areas of this country, even in states that boast some of the world's best research universities, a STEM career may seem unattainable. Many rural students have never met a practicing scientist or engineer. Their teachers often struggle with limited resources for the STEM curriculum. It is unlikely that their schools have well equipped science laboratories that may provide hands-on experiences that are known to inspire scientific curiosity and a love of STEM at an early age. The nearest science museum may be too far for a field trip, if the district can even afford to transport them. And broadband access remains an urgent challenge.

Yet we know with certainty that talent for science has nothing to do with one where is born, any more than it has to do with the color of one's skin or one's gender. Our country is filled with smart young people from all backgrounds who may one day contribute to our science and innovation leadership. In fact, we need them to contribute to our science and innovation future if we are to continue to compete on the global stage and develop solutions to our most pressing challenges. But these young people must first see it as a possibility for themselves, and that starts with access to high-quality STEM education and hands-on research experiences in their local schools.

The Rural STEM Education Act provides for research and development to increase access to STEM education opportunities in rural schools and to provide teachers with the resources they need to teach more effectively. The bill also directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to develop a prize competition to advance research and development of creative technologies for expanded broadband access. This bill further provides for assessments of Federal investments in rural STEM education to be conducted by the National Academies and the Government Accountability Office.

H.R. 210 is a good, bipartisan bill. I am pleased that the House passed it today along with a series of other bills focused on growing, diversifying, and strengthening our STEM workforce for the future. I look forward to working with Ranking Member Lucas and colleagues in both bodies to enact all of these bills.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER JUSTIN BLUBAUGH

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Justin Blubaugh for his 16 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Blubaugh has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

NATIVE AMERICAN CHILD PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1688, the ''Native American Child Protection Act,'' (''NACPA'') which authorizes three programs aimed at ensuring that Tribes have the tools they need to treat, prevent, investigate, and prosecute instances of family violence, child abuse, and child neglect involving Native American children and families.

The original version of these programs passed as part of then-Senator John McCain's Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act, but the programs were never fully funded and have not been reauthorized by Congress.

This legislation would do the following:

Establish a new National Indian Resource Services Center to provide tribes with technical assistance, advice, and training on addressing child abuse, family violence, and child neglect.

Support efforts to improve intergovernmental coordination between federal and tribal personnel responding to those issues.

Authorize grants through the Indian Child Abuse Treatment Grant Program to establish treatment programs and culturally appropriate services for the victims of child abuse and neglect in Indian Country.

Authorize formula grants to Tribes under the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Program to support the hiring of caseworkers and the establishment and expansion of tribal programs that investigate, prosecute, and prevent incidents of child abuse, child neglect, and family violence in Indian Country.

American Indian and Alaska Native children and their families who experience child maltreatment or family violence often have few opportunities to find accessible, culturally-appropriate services to help them address the trauma from these events.

Furthermore, prevention funding is almost non-existent for this population, removing opportunities to prevent trauma— before it happens and avoid families and children slipping into crisis.

The federal government has a solemn responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable members of Indigenous communities—children—are protected.

Guarding against crimes committed against our Native communities will always be one of my highest priorities, and this bill is a strong step in the right direction.

Native communities must have the support and resources necessary to help children learn, grow, and live healthy lives.

In Texas and across the country, too many Indigenous children have been victims of violence, abuse, and neglect.

The Federal government has an urgent responsibility to these children, and we should be doing all that we can to help them secure a bright future.

This legislation fulfills a promise made years ago to address the impact of abuse of Native children in federally-run boarding schools and prevent anything like it from ever happening again.

This promise was never fulfilled because these programs were never funded, and the Tribes never received the support they needed.

This is why we must pass this bill: to finally uphold our responsibility to help Tribes ensure that Native American children are safe and healthy.

This legislation will help ensure that the Federal government is upholding its commitments to help tribes and tribal organizations protect the next generation.

Every Native child must have access to community-based, culturally appropriate services that help them grow up safe, healthy, and spiritually strong—free from abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and the damaging effects of substance abuse.

For this reason, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 1688.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, on Roll Call No. 138 on Agreeing to the Waters of California Part B Amendment En Bloc No. 1 for H.R. 2547, the Comprehensive Debt Collection Improvement Act and Roll Call No. 143 on passage for H.R. 1065, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, I was unable to vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 138, and YEA on Roll Call No. 143.

IN RECOGNITION OF CAPTAIN GEORGE SIRAGUSA

HON. JENNIFER WEXTON

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Ms. WEXTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Captain George Siragusa (USN, Ret.) on his retirement as the longtime Board Chair for Virginia's 10th Congressional District, Service Academy Advisory Board.

Captain Siragusa has served on the board since 2010 and as the Virginia District 10 Board Chairman since 2014. The board has a body of over fifty military officers who annually screen high school students applying for a Congressional Nomination, a requirement for eligibility to obtain an appointment to the four Federal Service Academies. Under Captain Siragusa's leadership, the board has successfully recommended nomination and subsequent admission to over 150 future members of the United States Armed Services to the four service academies. In addition to his leadership to the board members, Captain Siragusa has served as an advisor and mentor to many of the candidates as they entered this rigorous and challenging endeavor.

Outside of his service with the Federal Service Academy Advisory Board, Captain Siragusa is a private sector consulting firm entrepreneur, investor, and adviser. He is also a seasoned leader-instructor at the university level for 10 years, having taught at the United States Naval Academy, George Washington University, Wake Forest University, and currently George Mason University where he is an adjunct professor at their Volgenau School of Engineering. He also serves as a Senior Business Adviser and Counselor to over 100 clients in his portfolio at the George Mason's Enterprise Center's Small Business Development Center.

I congratulate Captain Siragusa on his retirement and thank him for his service to Virginia's 10th Congressional District. I wish nothing but the best in all his future endeavors.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER RICK SANNER

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Rick Sanner for his 26 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.