

11th Congressional District of California, the great state of California, and our country. Nicole is one of the most exceptional staff members, leaders, and public servants that I have had the pleasure of working with, and it has been an honor to have had her leading my staff for the past 16 years during my time in Congress.

Nicole was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, and grew up wanting to make positive change in her country and the world. Her father and stepmother, Jude and Julia Damasco, instilled in her a strong work ethic and the importance of serving the community and those in need, and she credits her grandmother, Maria Damasco, for being an inspiration in her life and always being there for her. Throughout high school, she spent time registering voters in San Francisco and the Bay Area and volunteering for the San Francisco Democratic Party. Although she is a talented artist and studied architecture in Italy during college, she felt the best way to make a difference in her community was to pursue a career in public service. She transferred to University of California, Santa Cruz to pursue a degree in Politics. While there, she interned for the Santa Cruz County Women's Commission for 2 years and participated in the University of California, Washington DC (UCDC) program, interning in Senator Barbara Boxer's Washington, DC office.

After graduating from University of California, Santa Cruz in 2002, Nicole was hired as a Constituent Representative in Senator Barbara Boxer's office in San Francisco. She proved to be a skilled and dedicated employee and was soon promoted to Assistant to the Director of Constituent Services. In 2004, she became a Legislative Correspondent in Senator Boxer's Los Angeles office and was part of a team that changed how legislative correspondence was handled by transitioning to a centralized, digitized, state-based constituent correspondence system. It was an innovative approach that allowed the Senator to quickly receive and send constituent responses. Nicole did not know it at the time, but her team helped lay the groundwork for how state and district-based constituent correspondence is now handled in many congressional offices.

In 2006, Nicole returned to the Bay Area and continued to work in Senator Boxer's San Francisco office. During that time, she volunteered for my Congressional campaign because she felt that I could truly help improve the lives of people in our community. Thanks to the hard work by many excellent staff and volunteers like Nicole, I was elected to Congress that same year, and I asked Nicole to join my team as my Director of Constituent Services and Field Representative. Nicole went to work right away, laying the foundation for and building my casework, field outreach, and constituent services programs from the ground up. She made it her mission to make sure that everyone who reached out to my office for assistance would receive the best service possible. She ensured that quality constituent service was engrained in the culture of my office. Thanks in large part to her tireless efforts, I am proud to say that my office has helped many thousands of individuals over the years.

It was clear that Nicole was a natural leader when I hired her, and I promoted her to District Director in less than a year of her being on my staff. She took over, leading my entire

District team at a time when people in the country and my district were hurting the most. During the subprime mortgage crisis in 2008, people were losing their jobs, homes, and lifesavings. Continuing to lead with a constituent-focused approach to her work, Nicole put together a team that would be laser focused on serving the people of California's 11th and 9th Congressional Districts throughout those difficult times. She immediately acted to help organize the first-of-its-kind housing and mortgage assistance events in the country with the purpose of keeping people in their homes. She also helped organize job fairs and events that connected thousands of people with jobs, and made sure struggling veterans and seniors were informed of and received the services available to them. I know without a doubt that because of Nicole's perseverance and tenacity, we made an impact on many people and were there for them during some of the darkest periods of their lives.

Nicole stood tall and helped lead my team, all while facing great adversity herself. At the beginning of her career with my office, she provided care for her half-sister, Jessica, who ended up tragically taking her life in 2009. Nicole's stepfather and grandfather had also taken their lives shortly before, all of which took a toll on her mother and made it clear that Nicole needed to step up and help care for her other half-sister, Alaina. Throughout all this tragedy, Nicole kept a brave face, continuing to work hard and lead my office while also becoming Alaina's legal guardian and providing a stable home for her sister. Unfortunately, Nicole's mother also ended up taking her life, but thanks in part to Nicole's support, her sister has thrived, graduating from high school and with highest honors from University of California, Berkeley, studying and traveling around the world, and starting a successful career of her own. Nicole is very proud of her sister's accomplishments and is grateful for the special bond they share.

After serving as my District Director during some of the greatest challenges in our nation's history and following some very hard-fought campaigns, I asked Nicole to move across the country and become my Chief of Staff. She didn't hesitate and since 2013, she has led my team as Chief of Staff with great dedication and conviction. Due largely to Nicole's efforts, my office has had one of the highest retention rates and one of the most diverse staffs in Congress. Throughout her time as Chief of Staff, she has greatly contributed to my success in Congress, helping move forward my legislative priorities and those of my district.

As a strong leader and with her creative, out-of-the-box thinking, Nicole empowered and motivated my staff to take every opportunity to serve my district and lead on important issues that make a difference in people's lives. This was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, at which time Nicole immediately transitioned my staff to remote work and successfully kept my office operating at full capacity to continue serving our constituents and bring them the most up-to-date information without knowing what the days, weeks, and months ahead had in store.

Throughout my time in office, Nicole has helped pave the way for my major accomplishments, from the long-awaited construction of a veterans' clinic in French Camp, to helping improve our water, technology, energy, and envi-

ronmental policy. Nicole made sure that my constituents and my district always came first and that bringing services and resources to our community always remained the priority.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Nicole's dedication to serving others not only extends to humans but to animals, too. Over the years, she has opened her home to over 15 animals—including rabbits, cats, dogs, a hamster, and even an iguana. Nicole has also personally rescued over 25 stray and injured animals from the streets of my district. She took them in, rehabilitated, and rehomed them, and with the invaluable and generous help of Harvest Home Animal Sanctuary in Stockton, ensured that the animals that crossed her path found good, loving homes. Her heart knows no bounds, and she continuously demonstrates the true meaning of selflessness.

Nicole's colleagues describe her as compassionate, understanding, and always there for them when they need her, no matter how big or small the issue. She does everything possible to see that staff have the tools and support they need to see the job through. Beyond being a boss and supervisor, Nicole is a friend and mentor to many and is there for the team when they need advice and support.

Nicole Damasco is an outstanding employee, boss, colleague, friend, mentor, and leader. Her commitment, focus, kindness, and compassion are unrivaled. She has dedicated over 20 years of her life to public service and is the embodiment of what a public servant should be. Throughout my career in Congress, she has supported me and my team and has made a lasting impact on the lives of my constituents. With great appreciation and admiration for her, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Nicole Damasco for her distinguished and invaluable service.

#### HONORING MR. BILLY JOHNSON

#### HON. DAVID ROUZER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 23, 2022*

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of William (Billy) Harrison Johnson who was recently named Distinguished Alumnus of the Year by North Carolina State University College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS). Billy earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from NC State in 1986, and in recent years he has served on the NC State School of Public and International Affairs Advisory Board as well as the CHASS Dean's Board. These roles provide him with the opportunity to assist both students and alumni with educational and career-related opportunities in Washington, D.C.

Billy received this prestigious award at the annual Evening of the Stars, which honors those alumni whose success increases the value of an NC State degree and add to North Carolina State University's growing legacy of excellence, impact, and service. As a proud alumnus myself, I salute Billy for his hard earned achievements and commend his efforts to assist NC State's next generation of leaders.

As the chief lobbyist for the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI), Billy serves as a leading voice on Capitol Hill for both small and commercial businesses in the recycling field. Long a champion of the recycled

materials industry, Billy helped establish the bipartisan Congressional Recycling Caucus in 2004 to educate lawmakers regarding the economic and environmental benefits of recycling. Billy helped draft and enact the bipartisan RECYCLE Act, the first standalone piece of recycling legislation in history providing funding for public education and awareness programs to improve our country's recycling system. From 2004 to 2008, Billy also served as a judge of the White House Federal Recycling Initiative "Closing-the-Loop" Awards Program.

Billy has a proven record of helping members understand the importance of the recycling industry through Washington and district fly-ins, one-on-one meetings with congressional offices, and more. In 2021, his achievements led to his recognition by the National Institute for Lobbying and Ethics as one of the top 100 lobbyists in America for his demonstrated commitment to give back to the community and profession while adhering to the highest ethical standards.

Billy accepted this award along with several distinguished alumni including: Bryan K. Blinson—College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Dr. Philip Snider—College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Turan Duda—College of Design; Johnny L. Crow—College of Education; Quint M. Barefoot—College of Engineering; Dan Pleasant—College of Engineering; Mark Wyatt—College of Engineering; Amir S. Mehr—Poole College of Management; Kenneth O. Summerville—College of Natural Resources; Nora Ann Gardner—College of Sciences; Brian L. McMurray—Wilson College of Textiles; Sarah J. Ewing—College of Veterinary Medicine. John C. Borden was awarded the Ronnie Shavlik Award. Other awards were presented to Kevin M. Kroeger—Outstanding Young Alumnus; John F. Tesh Jr.—Award of Merit; and Ben Kinney—Meritorious Service Award.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to congratulate and recognize Billy as well as all the other Evening of the Stars award recipients for their outstanding accomplishments. They have all made—and continue to make—Wolfpack Nation proud.

#### RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF COLONEL PETER J. WEINA

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 23, 2022*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Colonel Peter J. Weina, PhD, MD, FACP, FIDSA upon his retirement from the Office of Research Protections at the Defense Health Agency. Colonel Weina has served for 45 years in various federal capacities, and his dedicated service will be sorely missed.

Colonel Weina joined the United States Army right out of high school and completed both a bachelor's and a master's degree in zoology at the University of Wisconsin Madison. As a second lieutenant, he completed a Ph.D. in pathology and parasitology, also at UW Madison. After four years at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), he entered medical school at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences. Mr. Weira then completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at Tripler Army Medical Cen-

ter and a fellowship in infectious diseases at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Colonel Weina, a board-certified doctor in both internal medicine and infectious diseases, also holds a Certificate of Knowledge in clinical tropical medicine and travelers' health. From his time as Chief of Pharmacology at WRAIR and subsequently as Director of Viral Diseases, to his fellowships with the American College of Physicians and the Infectious Diseases Society of America, Colonel Weina has proven himself a competent leader and a measured presence in the medical field.

Over his illustrious career, Colonel Weina has published over 70 articles in peer-reviewed journals, five chapters in books, and two books of his own. He has worked to expand the availability and licensure of intravenous Artesunate, the first new anti-malarial drug since the advent of quinine over 300 years ago. In 2020, this life-saving treatment was licensed by the Food and Drug Administration.

Colonel Weina formerly headed the only College of American Pathologists-accredited leishmania diagnostics laboratory in the world. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the Federal CDC Silo Buster's Collaborative Award of Excellence in 2008, the Colonel George W. Hunter III Certificate in 2011, and the Bronze Star for Service. Colonel Weina's accolades extend far beyond these, as many have recognized his courage, passion, and dedication to bettering his community. He has combined the opportunity to serve his country with the chance to advance our medical knowledge and capabilities, and our nation is better off for his efforts.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Colonel Peter J. Weina for his 45 years of service to the United States. His contributions to our Nation are innumerable and his impact has been felt by countless Americans. He has been an inspiration and a mentor to the next generation of health professionals, and I wish him the best in his retirement and may happiness and success find him in all future endeavors.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. RUSS FULCHER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 23, 2022*

Mr. FULCHER. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 544, S. 989.

#### RECOGNIZING LT. COL. ERIC VAN DE HEY

#### HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 23, 2022*

Mr. GALLAGHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a lifetime of service to the American people by Lieutenant Colonel Eric Van De Hey.

Lt. Col. Van De Hey is retiring after 35 years of selfless service to the United States. Since enlisting in 1987, he has dedicated his career in the U.S. Army to serving both his fel-

low soldiers and the United States. First and foremost, he has been a leader to many young soldiers, as he has trained soldiers at all levels of responsibility. He utilized his strong leadership skills while leading tactical platoons, strategic detachments, and serving in federal agencies. During his time in the Army, Lt. Col. Van De Hey served valiantly in many conflicts and missions including Operation Just Cause, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. For his service he earned numerous awards and commendations including the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Valorous Unit Citation, the Meritorious Unit Citation, and the Combat Action Badge. His multiple deployments and awards are another clear example of his impressive dedication to serving our country.

Throughout his career, Lt. Col. Van De Hey has played a significant role in ensuring the safety of our troops while leading our military into the next generation of warfighting. As the Executive Officer in charge of Test Parachutists, he ensured that Army parachutes were safe and reliable for our service members. Lt. Col. Van De Hey was also responsible for overseeing great technological advancements for the military, such as research into self-driving cars and the use of satellite images to monitor humanitarian crises. It is evident through these accolades that Lt. Col. Van De Hey has committed his career to serving the United States of America and the Army.

As Lt. Col. Van De Hey returns to private life, it is my honor to recognize his years of service in the United States military. I invite all members of this body to join me in congratulating Lt. Col. Eric Van De Hey and his family on his retirement. Our Nation is safer because of Lt. Col. Van De Hey's unwavering service and commitment to his country.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 2022 PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL'S SEEFELDT AWARDEES

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 23, 2022*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2022 Prince William County Arts Council's Seefeldt Awardees. These Awards for Arts Excellence were established nearly two decades ago in honor of Kathleen Kenna Seefeldt, a former Chairwoman of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. These awards recognize and celebrate the artists, art organizations, volunteers, educators, and businesses that build upon the foundation in which Ms. Seefeldt's legacy of supporting the cultural arts.

Kathleen Seefeldt moved to Prince William County in 1970 and her deep love for her newfound community inspired her to run for office. She was elected to the Board and served as the Occoquan District Supervisor for fifteen years before being elected the first at-large chair of the Board in 1991. Her two terms as chair led to Prince William County's economic and cultural growth, and her emphasis on incorporating the arts has helped Prince William become the thriving community it is today.

This honorary award in her name celebrates the many artistic achievements in Prince William County. This year's honorees have done