

sack, and a pass block in the Rams' victory over the Cincinnati Bengals.

Ernest is a prime example of hard work, dedication, and has a contagious love for the game of football.

His work ethic and drive are examples for us all to follow, and we are blessed to have him here in the First District of Georgia.

I Congratulate Ernest on being a world champion.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ACT OF 2022

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**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2022*

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the Universal Prekindergarten and Early Childhood Education Act of 2022, a version of which I have introduced in seven previous Congresses. My bill would establish and expand prekindergarten programs in public and public charter schools for three- and four-year-old children. The prekindergarten years are critical for children's brain development.

My bill seeks a breakthrough in public education by providing funding for states to add prekindergarten for children at three and four years of age, like kindergarten programs for five-year-old children now routinely available in public schools. This bill would eliminate major shortcomings of unevenly available day care and, importantly, would take advantage of the safe facilities required in public schools.

My bill provides federal funds to states, which must be matched by at least 20 percent of a state's own funds, to establish or expand universal, voluntary prekindergarten in public and public charter schools, regardless of income. The classes, which would be part of a full-day program and run throughout the entire school year, must be taught by teachers who possess equivalent qualifications to those teaching other grades in the school. The funds would supplement, not supplant, other federal funds for early childhood education. The unique moneysaving aspect of my bill is that it uses the existing public-school infrastructure and trained teachers to make early childhood education available to all, saving billions of dollars in implementation costs.

The success of Head Start and other prekindergarten programs, combined with new scientific evidence on the importance of brain development in early childhood, virtually mandates the expansion of early childhood education to all children. Early learning programs mainly have been available only to the affluent, who can afford them, and to some low-income families in programs such as Head Start, which would be unaffected by my bill. My bill provides a practical way to universal, public preschool education for the majority of families. The goal of the bill is to afford the benefits of early childhood education to the working poor, lower middle class and middle class, most of whom have been left out of this essential education for their children.

We cannot afford to allow the most fertile years for childhood development to pass unenriched. My bill responds to the great

needs of parents who seek early childhood education, as well as to today's brain science, which shows that a child's brain development begins much earlier than had been previously understood.

Considering the staggering cost of day care, the inaccessibility of early childhood education and the opportunity that early education offers to improve a child's chances of success, schooling for three- and four-year-old children is overdue. The absence of viable options for families demands our immediate attention.

My bill reflects what jurisdictions throughout the nation increasingly are trying to accomplish. The District of Columbia, for example, has achieved an extensive integration of early childhood education as part of a larger effort to improve D.C. public schools.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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HONORING THE CAREER OF DAVID BAYNE

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**HON. JAMES A. HIMES**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2022*

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a resident of Connecticut's 4th Congressional District and a friend, David Bayne.

David is an attorney and the President of the Board of Directors of Connecticut CASA, a great organization dedicated to fostering a statewide network of Court Appointed Special Advocates to serve the best interests of children who have dealt with abuse or neglect, and he's been a committed public servant to the town of Darien for nearly 20 years.

During his career, David has been a Selectman, a member of the Representative Town Meeting in Darien, a transportation specialist for the Connecticut League of Women Voters, and a member of the Weed Beach Building Committee. He also spent 17 years on Darien's Democratic Town Committee and served in various roles including Chairman.

David has always understood the importance of service and activism, and the capacity of those seeking to get involved and positively impact the lives of Connecticut residents. It has been a pleasure to work with David and I look forward to seeing the next phase of David's career of service to Darien, and the State of Connecticut.

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DEVIN THOMA

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**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2022*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Devin Thoma for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Devin Thoma is a student at Three Creeks K-8 and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Devin Thoma is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all

levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Devin Thoma for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassador for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

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MRS. TERESA VERA PEREZ

**HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2022*

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Teresa Vera Perez of Concepcion, Texas, who dedicated her life to serving the people of Duval County.

Mrs. Perez was born on November 25, 1933, to Saturnina Vera and Francisca Saenz Vera. At the age of 18, she married Mr. Asildo Lopez Perez with whom she shared a life for 57 years. During this time, they raised five children together: Elena, Ester, Eloy, and twins Eduardo and Ernesto.

Mrs. Perez first ran for Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2 in 1977 and won, making her the first female Justice of the Peace in Duval County history. She served a total of three terms, becoming a lifelong member of the Texas Justices of the Peace and Constables Association and Chaplain for the South Texas Association of Justices of the Peace and Constables. In addition to her time serving as Justice of the Peace, Mrs. Perez also worked as a Nurse's Aide at the P&S Hospital, previously located in Alice, Texas. Following her 12 years as Justice of the Peace, she continued to serve as an Honorable Judge by joining couples in matrimony.

Mrs. Perez was an active member of the Duval County and the Concepcion communities throughout her lifetime. She proudly served as a Eucharistic Minister and member of the Immaculate Concepcion Catholic Church Altar and Rosary Society as well as the Guadalupana and the Fiesta Del Rancho Committee. She was also crowned Queen of the Elderly Nutrition program twice. In 1993, at the age of 60 years old, she obtained her GED diploma in Alice, Texas. Mrs. Perez passed away on January 23, 2014. Although she is no longer with us, her memory remains eternal.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today to acknowledge the countless achievements and charitable acts of Mrs. Teresa Vera Perez. She devoted her life to the betterment of her community and her legacy will be no doubt be remembered by all who knew her. Her general love for life, her family, the Lord, and commitment to her neighbors is admirable. May she rest in peace.

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IN MEMORY OF ROBERT DANIEL CUADRA

**HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2022*

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Robert Daniel Cuadra.

Fatally struck by a stray bullet on January 19, 2022, I stand before you to say goodbye to Robert and wish him well in the next life.

Robert was a kind, respectful and polite young man. He loved his family and cared deeply about his future. His life was not easy, but a rough start would not define him. He would work hard and chase after his dreams. Robert understood clearly that he would have to fight for every inch of progress.

A senior at HARP Academy and a participant in the Upward Bound Program at Montclair University, Robert challenged himself academically. Often so engrossed in his studies, Robert chose to forgo time with his friends to prepare for college. He was a self-described homebody and favored time alone with his immediate family.

While enrolled at Upward Bound, a program for disadvantaged high school students, Robert blossomed. Montclair University was a place he felt comfortable and accepted. Taking classes in subjects that inspired him and interacting with people who shared his interests motivated him. Robert was on track, there was light at the end of the tunnel. He could find himself and engage in the many wonderful experiences that make our youth a memorable time.

As a father and grandfather, I can only imagine the hurt. I ask the Cuadra family to continue to tell stories about Robert and breathe life into his memory for his siblings and extended family. Robert's passing is especially difficult and its tragic to have lost a young man with so much potential. Our community was enriched by people like him, and his actions set an example for all to follow.

My heart breaks for Robert and I know he will be missed by many people. It is my hope that the love and support of friends and all those whose lives he touched will help the Cuadra family manage the loss of Robert. My thoughts and prayers are with all of them during this time of mourning. Robert brought happiness into our lives and everyone around him.

As we honor him today, I know there are still many young men and women in similar situations. While this moment in time is undeniably sad, we should draw inspiration from his story. Robert struggled and fought to get ahead in life. We honor him because he reminds us that life can be difficult, but we should never give up in the face of adversity.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, friends, family, and the residents of New Jersey in recognizing the memory of Robert Daniel Cuadra. We keep him in prayer, and we commit to watch over his family. Robert, may he rest in peace.

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COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING DR. BENJAMIN "BENJIE" SANTIAGO ON BEING SELECTED AS THE 2021 GUAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**HON. MICHAEL F.Q. SAN NICOLAS**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Mr. SAN NICOLAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Dr. Benjamin "Benjie" Santiago on being selected as

the 2021 Guam Department of Education (GDOE) Teacher of the Year. Dr. Santiago is an exemplary teacher whose commitment to service and devotion to community have and continue to inspire our youth, foster great leadership, and expand opportunities for our island students to lead successful lives.

The Teacher of the Year Program is the oldest and most prestigious national honors program focused on recognizing excellence in teaching. Providing a platform for highlighting both the extraordinary work and dedication of educators across the country and the importance of quality education in the futures of our youth, island, and nation, this program has uniquely directed community accolades to outstanding teachers in Guam since 1969. Following a rigorous nomination, evaluation, and observation process, Dr. Santiago was awarded the honor from among six finalists.

Dr. Santiago first discovered his passion for teaching when he took on roles as an instructor at cultural dance academies and a local fitness organization. Embracing his calling to help others on their personal paths of achievement, he navigated an extensive teaching career that has resulted in what is now 25 years with GDOE: In 1993, Dr. Santiago earned his Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education from the University of Guam. He then went on to earn his master's and doctoral degrees in education and educational leadership from the University of Portland and Argosy University respectively. Today, Dr. Santiago celebrates over 15 years of service to students and colleagues as a cultural dance and journalism teacher at Agueda I. Johnston Middle School.

As demonstrated by his countless achievements, Dr. Santiago has consistently gone above and beyond his duties within the school system. In addition to collaborative curriculum and intervention development for holistic student success, Dr. Santiago has served as an in-house mentor for new teachers, coordinated cultural events for his school community, and successfully trained a school choir to earn 3 gold medals in a CHamoru language competition. Further, he is a trailblazing force that has created curricula for Cultural Arts and Dance for all secondary grade levels, introduced a new method to simultaneously teach cultural dance to both face-to-face and online learners amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and developed a new CHamoru language program with support from local government agencies. Most impressive, however, is his personal undertaking to establish deeper understanding and awareness of cultural concepts as an inherent part of Guam's public education.

On behalf of the People of Guam, I would like to extend a sincere congratulations to Dr. Benjamin Santiago. His combined approach to advocate for both students and culture both challenges the traditional definitions of learning and success within the four walls of a classroom and better equips our youth to pursue any endeavor they dare to dream. Dr. Santiago's perseverance, ingenuity, and zeal to secure the best for our students encapsulates the limitless potential available to communities that work together in service of each other, and I wish him the best on the rest of his professional journey.

VICTORIA BEAGLE

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Victoria Beagle for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Victoria Beagle is a student at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Victoria Beagle is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Victoria Beagle for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassador for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

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HONORING DEVIN WILCOX AND HIS SERVICE TO THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the service and accomplishments of Devin Wilcox, my outstanding legislative assistant who's transitioning from my office to pursue a new opportunity. Devin joined my staff in 2019, after working in the private sector as a policy analyst. Since then, Devin has blossomed into an extraordinary policy wonk and leader.

Devin has been instrumental in my work to demonstrably change the lives of Black men and boys and improve our nation's infrastructure. Devin's legislative and political acumen were instrumental in building support for my recently enacted Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys Act. Devin also worked closely with transportation stakeholders on my priorities that were included in the Infrastructure Jobs and Investment Act.

Additionally, Devin has created pipelines for diverse students to access coveted internship, fellowship, and employment opportunities on Capitol Hill. Understandably, he has earned the respect of his colleagues and stakeholders alike.

Devin was born and raised in Florida City, Florida. He's a product of the Miami-Dade County Public School system and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida International University in 2014.

On behalf of Florida's 24th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Devin Wilcox for his extraordinary accomplishments, commitment to public service, and for being a trailblazer.