

consumers' demands for innovative financial products and services are met, and they receive the best pricing for them. Congress should not stifle private sector innovation by financial institutions and fintech firms that have already shown promise for reaching underbanked and rural consumers.

The USPS should remain focused on its core mission. The fact that only six people used the postal banking pilot confirms that consumers remain supportive of the free market and look to private firms for technological solutions to meet their banking needs.

Postal banking is harmful to the financial system and ultimately harmful to consumers. It will crowd out private sector financial innovation and ultimately fail to reach the very underserved communities Democrats claim they want to reach.

The USPS should remain focused on its core mission, not creeping into the provision of consumer financial services.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
DESTINATION ANN ARBOR
PRESIDENT AND CEO MARY
KERR

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Mary Kerr, President and CEO of Destination Ann Arbor on the occasion of her retirement. Her honorable 27 years of dedication to our Washtenaw County community are worthy of commendation.

Ms. Kerr's service to Washtenaw County started even before her time in tourism. Ms. Kerr began her career in hospitality as a manager at the historic Haab's Restaurant in Ypsilanti, Michigan. She served as the Executive Director for the Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau before becoming Executive Director for the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau. Under Ms. Kerr, the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureaus were merged into one countywide entity, bringing together our diverse communities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti for good.

During her time at Destination Ann Arbor, Ms. Kerr was instrumental in growing the budget of the organization. She also oversaw the creation of the Ann Arbor Sports Commission, a ten-year destination master plan for Washtenaw County that consists of a strategic plan to boost the local economy and other key initiatives to ensure Ann Arbor is a destination for travelers and locals alike. Outside of work, she continues to advocate for the hospitality industry through her roles on various boards in Washtenaw County.

Ms. Kerr has been recognized for her dedicated service through various awards, such as the Lifetime Achievement Award by Michigan Meetings and Events. She was also named CVB Star of the Year at the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism. Her stellar work as an ambassador for our community makes her beyond worthy of this recognition.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Mary Kerr for her 27 years of service. As we come together to celebrate her retirement, all of us in the Washtenaw community reflect on the great work she has

done that will benefit our area for years to come. I join with her family, friends, and colleagues in wishing her the very best in her retirement.

HONORING ANDREW PIERCE FOR
HIS SERVICE IN THE PEACE
CORPS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Andrew Pierce for his exceptional leadership and service as the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Chief Financial Officer and Director of Accounting and Financial Reporting at the Peace Corps.

During his nearly 7 years at the Peace Corps, Mr. Pierce played a vital role in ensuring resources were effectively and efficiently managed to support the important mission of the Peace Corps. He provided solutions during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when global evacuations of thousands of Peace Corps volunteers were necessary.

Mr. Pierce was instrumental in ensuring that the Peace Corps received a clean audit opinion during his entire tenure. This is particularly remarkable because of the inherently transient nature of the Peace Corps workforce and the global footprint of the agency's financial operations. He was highly respected by his colleagues for his keen intellect, professionalism; kindness, dedication to service and being a consummate team player.

President Kennedy said that by establishing the Peace Corps, "[W]e intend to make full use of the resources and talents of private institutions and groups. Universities, voluntary agencies, labor unions and industry will be asked to share in this effort—contributing diverse sources of energy and imagination—making it clear that the responsibility for peace is the responsibility of our entire society." Mr. Pierce answered the call and did his part, enabling the Peace Corps and our nation to strengthen bonds of friendship and foster global peace.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Andrew Pierce for his service and wishing him continued success in his role as the Executive Director for Budget and Analysis for Maryland.

RECOGNIZING MINNESOTA'S 2022
SOMALI-AMERICAN HERITAGE
WEEK

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Minnesota's vibrant Somali-American community and the many cultural, economic and social contributions members make to our state, and in recognition of Somali-American Heritage Week during July 2–17 in Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

The commemoration of Somali Independence Day is marked by Somali Week celebrations in Minnesota, hosted by Rising Impact, a nonprofit dedicated to the safety and success

of Somali-American youth in Minnesota. Hosted in locations throughout Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the festivities are a chance to unite and celebrate Minnesota's diversity through a broad range of artistic, cultural and athletic events.

This year the celebrations drew together more than 45,000 participants to enjoy the food, music, dance, films, and the history of the Somali people and the Somali-Americans who call Minnesota home. Some of the most notable events from this year's celebration include a roundtable discussion with the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, Larry E. André and community members about ongoing humanitarian relief efforts and the United States support for democracy in Somalia, the "Xasuuso (Remember) 1960" event which tells the story of Somalia's independence, and the Growth Conference, which is a chance for members of the African diaspora to share knowledge and resources to build up minority-owned businesses.

Led by the Somali Week Chairperson, Daud Mohamed, the organizers and volunteers for Somali Week continue to forge strong ties with various community, corporate and government partners to bring this vibrant festival to life each year.

Madam Speaker, Minnesota's Somali community has added greatly to the fabric of our state and our Nation, and they are a prominent part of the diverse community that makes Minnesota a great place to call home. Please join me in paying tribute to the community members who come together each year to celebrate Somali Week, and who work every day to foster, educate, and promote cultural understanding and traditions among all Minnesotans.

SUPPORTING U.S. NAVY LT. RIDGE
ALKONIS AND U.S./JAPAN RELATIONS

**HON. AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN
RADEWAGEN**

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of U.S. Navy Lieutenant Ridge Alkonis, a sailor currently stationed abroad in Japan. Essential to the economic and political stability of the Pacific region around my home of American Samoa is the U.S.-Japan alliance. As a significant part of this alliance, the U.S. Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-defense Force jointly project power and security throughout the Pacific; and, enabling this naval partnership are the 19,000 American sailors stationed there. While the U.S. and Japanese naval forces have long maintained a strong bond, the relationship is deteriorating as a result of Japanese injustices against U.S. military members. The case of U.S. Navy Lieutenant Ridge Alkonis, who is of Samoan descent, exemplifies the disparate treatment American sailors receive in Japan. While driving his wife and three children to get ice cream during a family outing one Saturday in May 2021, LT. Alkonis suffered a sudden and unforeseen medical emergency which resulted in a tragic car accident, causing the

death of two Japanese citizens. When I became aware of this tragedy last year, I immediately conveyed my condolences to Ambassador Tomita and continue to pray for the family of those who passed away. At the scene of the accident, LT. Alkonis was immediately arrested by Japanese authorities without receiving any medical care and imprisoned in solitary confinement for 26 days. He was systematically deprived of sleep, denied legal counsel while undergoing harsh daily interrogations by Japanese authorities, and pressured to sign false accusations. Financial compensation plays an influential role in the Japanese justice system, with Japanese citizens possessing considerable leverage over foreigners in court. LT. Alkonis was advised into signing a \$1.65 million financial settlement, the largest private financial settlement ever entered into by a U.S. service member in Japan. Despite there being no evidence of negligence on his part, LT. Alkonis cooperated fully in the investigation and paid the financial settlement in full; nevertheless, he was still sentenced to three years in prison. And last month, the Tokyo High Court rejected the majority of evidence submitted by LT. Alkonis including the Japanese police arrest warrant and a medical diagnosis by military physicians. The Court dismissed LT. Alkonis's appeal last week, even disregarding the financial settlement—an unprecedented decision by a Japanese court. Many familiar with these proceedings have called this situation the most egregious case against an American service member by Japan in over 60 years. I'm deeply troubled by Japan's treatment of LT. Alkonis. A review of the facts clearly shows that LT. Alkonis did not fall asleep and was not negligent, that he did in fact suffer a medical emergency. While indeed a tragedy, this was an accident in every sense of the word. Additionally, there have been numerous Status of Forces Agreement violations and human rights abuses by Japan. I have even heard persuasive allegations of illicit domestic political interference in LT. Alkonis's court proceedings by the victims' family, which is strongly connected to the Tokyo High Court. The treatment of LT. Alkonis has been unacceptable and is hurting the U.S.-Japan alliance exactly when it needs to be strengthened. America cannot allow our brave sons and daughters to be so vulnerably exposed while serving abroad. I call on President Biden, as well as our Ambassador to Japan—Ambassador Emanuel, to bring LT. Alkonis home and to immediately work with our Japanese partners to ensure that the terms of the Status of Forces Agreement are immediately reviewed and enforced at every level. Now more than ever, we need to acknowledge and correct injustices and take the appropriate steps to strengthen this alliance by ensuring service members are treated fairly.

HONORING DIANE PORTER COOLEY

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the vibrant life of Diane Porter Cooley, a pillar of the Pajaro Valley and Santa Cruz County community, who passed away on March 10, 2022.

Born to a family that settled in Santa Cruz County in the 1850s, and raised on Las Lomas Ranch in Watsonville, Diane had a deep connection to the land and people of the central coast of California. Her father Tom was one of the four founders of Driscoll Berries, and Diane continued her involvement with agriculture until her death. Diane and her husband, Don, were active members of the community, constantly engaged in the issues they cared about.

A deeply passionate civic leader, Diane worked tirelessly to protect and preserve the environment, and was an outspoken advocate for the people of the Pajaro Valley. She once said, "I care for the trees but for humans, too. People should have the chance to thrive just like the Sequoia should stand tall."

She was a dynamic agent of change who championed the creation of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, the Pajaro Valley Arts Council, the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. She was involved with the Nature Conservancy, served on the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency board, and was a supporter of many other causes, including Pajaro Valley Shelter Services, Salud Para la Gente, the University of California, Santa Cruz, Cabrillo College, and Second Harvest Food Bank in Watsonville. We may never know just how many lives she touched, or how many people received an education, braces, medical care, a home, or love when they needed it most thanks to her.

Madam Speaker, Diane Porter Cooley's outreach and philanthropy extended far and wide throughout our community. As Santa Cruz County bids farewell to its beloved daughter of 95 years, may her legacy of giving continue to inspire us for generations to come.

CONGRATULATING DOUGAL NELSON FOR RECEIVING THE KARL FLEMKE PIONEER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD THROUGH JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT USA

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dougal Nelson for receiving the Karl Flemke Pioneer Achievement Award for his work with Junior Achievement of the Heartland through Junior Achievement USA.

Mr. Nelson was very honored to win this award, which is given to first-time presidents of Junior Achievement organizations throughout the country with between 2 and 6 years of service in their role. Nelson was among five others nominated. Junior Achievement of the Heartland, a member of the global JA network, has been serving young people in the Quad-Cities and surrounding areas for 66 years—equipping them with the skillset and mindset to create sustainable businesses, find meaningful employment, and build thriving communities. Mr. Nelson exemplifies the mission statement of Junior Achievement of the Heartland, which is to "inspire and prepare young people to succeed." As CEO, Mr. Nelson believes it is his job to put the right people in the right places to help children succeed and says that his staff and the community are to thank

for him receiving this award. Because of his strong leadership, he was able to build a culture of trust within the organization and make a big difference for youth in the community. I commend Mr. Nelson for his resolve to help the youth in the Quad Cities and surrounding areas.

It is because of strong community leaders such as Dougal Nelson that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Dougal Nelson for winning the Junior Achievement organization's Karl Flemke Pioneer Achievement Award.

HONORING THE COURAGEOUS LIFE AND SERVICE OF JOHN W. SEAMAN

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Ms. STEFANIK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John W. Seaman, for his brave service in the New York Army National Guard.

John Seaman was born in 1937 in Wantagh, New York. When he was young, his family moved to Greenfield and started a farm. In 1959, John entered the New York Army National Guard and was enlisted with the 247th Medical Company. John was deployed twice during his tenure with the National Guard. Both of his deployments were in the Return Forces to Germany Operations in 1990 and 1992 following the fall of the Berlin Wall. During these deployments, John supported active troops with military medical support and delivering aid.

For his brave service during the 1990 deployment, John was awarded the Army Commendation Medal. In 1974, John's unit was awarded the National Guard Superior Unit Award for maintaining the Guard's highest standards. John retired from the service in 1997 at the rank of Sergeant First Class E-7 and was awarded the Army Service Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal for many years of service in the National Guard.

In addition to his time in the National Guard, John loyally served his local community in a variety of different roles. In 1961, John and his wife moved to Corinth, New York, where he worked as the Superintendent of Buildings, Grounds, Maintenance, Custodial Staff, and the Bus Garage for the Corinth School District. He worked for the school district for a total of 37 years. While working for the school, John was actively involved in multiple local organizations. He was a member of the village planning board, president of Rondac Campers Association, and commander of the Horace D. Washburn American Legion Post 533.

Throughout his life, John showed exceptional dedication to serving his country and his local community. We are proud to join the Saratoga County Veterans Association as part of the monthly Honor our Deceased Veterans Ceremony to honor John. On behalf of the 21st District of New York, I would like to thank John Seaman and his family for their service to the country and to the Corinth community.