

RECOGNIZING DEBORAH GYM'S
PERFECT PSAT SCORE

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding academic accomplishments of a constituent from my district, Deborah Gym.

Deborah is a sophomore at Central Bucks South High School who regularly demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence, with this dedication culminating in her achieving a perfect score of 1520 on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT). Deborah demonstrated a proficiency in various focuses of reading, including information and ideas, craft and structure, and expression of ideas, and mathematics, including a remarkable understanding of algebra, advanced mathematics, problem-solving and data analysis, and geometry and trigonometry.

Deborah's performance on the PSAT should serve as a testament to her character as an intelligent and motivated young woman. I am encouraged by her motivation to perform incredibly in her academic career, and I am proud to represent such remarkable young people in my district.

It is my hope that, by Deborah's example, students throughout my district and throughout the country are encouraged to challenge themselves academically, and endeavor to strive for excellence in every facet of their lives. Moreover, the example provided by young men and young women, like Deborah, should serve as inspiration to challenge ourselves and strive for excellence in every facet of our lives.

I would like to wish Deborah the best in her future endeavors, both academically and professionally, and once again congratulate her on her incredible performance on the PSAT.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT CABANA'S
YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize Robert Cabana for his years of service in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Mr. Cabana is retiring at the end of this year after serving as the agency's associate administrator, making him the highest-ranking civil servant.

Robert Cabana acts as the agency's chief operating officer and manages more than 18,000 employees. Before serving in his position, Mr. Cabana served as the director of NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center in my district. There, he oversaw all NASA facilities and activities at the spaceport.

Robert has spent countless years serving his country, graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1971 and commissioning as a second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps. Robert Cabana retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in September 2000 as a colonel.

Robert Cabana has recorded four space flights, logging a total of 38 days in Space.

Cabana was inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame and named an Associate Fellow in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and a Fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. He also received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Presidential Distinguished Rank Award, and the National Space Club Florida Committee's Dr. Kurt H. Debus Award. Col. Cabana is also a recipient of the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement's National Space Trophy.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Col. Robert Cabana and his dedication to serving his country. While he will be sorely missed, I would like to wish him well in his retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
MR. KERRY ARMSTRONG

HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. W. Kerry Armstrong, Chairman of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), for skillfully shepherding the ARC forward as its chairman for the past ten years. Kerry will conclude his chairmanship at the end of this year, and I know the other members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation, who represent the greater Atlanta region, will join me in thanking Kerry for his dedicated service on the ARC Board, which will continue even as he departs the chairmanship.

The ARC plays an invaluable role in the health of the Atlanta region. Under Kerry's leadership, my colleagues and I have worked successfully with the ARC on numerous initiatives important to the region, including delivering Older Americans Act services, workforce development, regional transportation planning, and homeland security. However, when it comes to Kerry and the ARC leadership, there is perhaps no issue as singularly important as the protection and preservation of our state's water supply. In this very critical area, the ARC's work is unrivaled.

Kerry Armstrong came to Atlanta over thirty years ago, attracted by the beauty of the region, and I dare say, of his wife, Wendy, whom he met there. Kerry has pursued a successful career in real estate development and finance; and over time has served in numerous public-private roles, including chairing notable community improvement districts (CIDs) in the region.

As Kerry turns the page on this chapter in his life, I want to congratulate him, Wendy, their daughter Jenny, and her husband Ben, and let Kerry know how much we value him and count on him for advice and support. The Atlanta region is richer for his efforts.

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens takes up the gavel this January, as incoming Chair; and he will be fortunate to be working alongside ARC Executive Director Anna Roach, whose selection Kerry spearheaded. On behalf of the citizens in the Atlanta region, we thank Kerry for his guiding hand at the ARC, his dedication to our communities, and his service to the great state of Georgia.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT
OF COLUMBIA SPECIAL ELEC-
TIONS HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Special Elections Home Rule Act. This bill would give the District of Columbia complete authority to set the date of special elections for local offices, like other jurisdictions. This bill would remove a limitation in the D.C. Home Rule Act that is not only inconsistent with the self-government granted by the Home Rule Act, but is also harmful.

In 2012, I got legislation enacted that gave the D.C. Board of Elections (Board) more flexibility to set the date of special elections for local offices. Although I sought complete authority for D.C. to set the date of special elections, the 2012 law did not include this home-rule principle.

The Home Rule Act originally required the Board to hold special elections on the first Tuesday occurring more than 114 days after a vacancy and allowed the Board to schedule special elections on the same day as the next general election if that election occurred within 60 days from when a special election would otherwise have been held. This inflexibility led to special elections being held on religious holidays and forced D.C. to hold a special election separate from an upcoming general election, costing D.C. hundreds of thousands of dollars. The 2012 law requires the Board to hold a special election on a Tuesday occurring between 70 and 174 days after a vacancy.

This bill is an important step to perfect home rule for D.C. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING CENTRAL PHENIX
CITY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL
TEAM FOR WINNING THE 7A
STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Central Phenix City football team for winning the AHSAA Class 7A state title.

On December 6, 2023, The Central Phenix City Red Devils left no doubt as to who deserves to be state champion, prevailing in a close game against four-time-champion Thompson 21 to 19 to secure their title win. The game was played at Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

The Central Phenix City Red Devils finished their championship season undefeated. This was head coach Patrick Nix's first state title victory at Central Phenix City and the Red Devils' third football state title in school history.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Coach Nix, the Central Phenix City High School football team, students, faculty and all the fans. Go Red Devils.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF PETE ALFARO

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life of my friend and longtime community leader, Pedro Cuellar "Pete" Alfaro of Baytown, Texas, who passed away on December 11, 2023. Pete devoted his life to public service, honorably serving as mayor of Baytown, as a city council member, on the Lee College Board of Regents, and on numerous other community and non-profit boards. He was a leader, mentor, friend, and role model to countless in the region, and leaves behind a legacy that will continue to inspire new generations of public servants for years to come.

Pete was born August 10, 1940, to Felipe and Victoriana Alfaro. After serving in the United States Army as a basic electronics instructor at Fort Bliss for three years, Pete attended the University of Texas at Austin. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1969 and was a lifetime member of the Texas Exes alum association. That same year, he began his career as an electrical engineer at Humble Oil and Refining, now ExxonMobil, where he would remain employed for the next 31 years.

After being elected to the city council in 1989 where he served two terms, Pete was voted in as the first Hispanic mayor of Baytown, a position he held for 11 years. His pivotal role in infrastructure development, particularly the completion of the Fred Hartman Bridge in partnership with then-Governor George W. Bush, epitomized his dedication to building a stronger Baytown.

However, his reach was not confined to the city hall, it extended to significant roles on boards such as the Lee College Board of Regents, the Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital Board of Trustees, and the Patient and Family Advisory Council. After facing the devastating loss of his daughter, Debi, Pete channeled his grief into a steadfast commitment to elevating healthcare standards. Chairing the Quality and Patient Safety Steering Committee at Houston Methodist Baytown for two decades, he worked tirelessly to ensure the surrounding community received and had access to top-notch healthcare. In recognition of his efforts, the Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital dedicated its new state-of-the-art education and training facility in honor of Pete and his wife, Lupe, in May of this year.

Throughout the years, Pete left a significant impact in the public and private sector. In fact, he was named the 2004 Baytown Sun newspaper's "Citizen of the Year" and the 2010 ExxonMobil's "Refiner of the Year" for his community service.

Pete was preceded in death by his beloved daughter, Debi Alfaro Yarborough. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Guadalupe "Lupe" Alfaro; daughters, Priscilla Alfaro and Sandra Rodriguez; son, Paul Alfaro; and grandchildren, Christopher, Marissa, Austin, Alexis, Mikaela, Emily, Nicholas, and Kelsey.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to honor the memory and legacy of Pete Alfaro. My heartfelt prayers are with his wife and loved ones during this challenging time. May Pete rest in

peace knowing his tenacious efforts for the betterment of Baytown, Lee College, and the surrounding community will forever be remembered.

HONORING THOMAS BRANIN

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Mr. Thomas Branin, Supervisor for the Three Chopt Magisterial District on the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, for his years of service to Henrico.

Mr. Branin, known to everyone in the community as Tommy, has represented thousands of community members—including me—over the last eight years with distinction—and with his beloved dog Newman, by his side. He has been a strong advocate for growing Henrico's economy, increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety, and bringing Henrico together.

After his election to the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, Tommy became the first Henrico Supervisor to place crosswalks throughout the entirety of his district. His focus on safety made it possible to install 14 miles of sidewalk in his communities—making it safer for pedestrians, runners, and bikers alike. His focus on community building made it possible to bring pickleball courts, bike tracks, and cricket games to his district. And his focus on the betterment of Henrico County drove his work to help facilitate the construction of two new high schools, replacing aging structures to provide Henrico students with a strong and healthy learning environment.

Tommy has proven to be a strong collaborator and leader. He has worked hard with regional partners to connect Henrico County and has encouraged partnerships at all levels to provide his constituents with better parks and trails to promote healthy, active lifestyles. Tommy has been a strong, passionate advocate for safety and his work to improve walkability throughout Henrico will continue to have a positive impact in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Thomas Branin, whom I am proud to call a friend—except on days when Tucker plays Freeman—for his service on behalf of the Three Chopt District and the entire Henrico County community and for his contributions to making Henrico a safer place for all.

RECOGNIZING PRINCIPAL DANA
NALLY

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate Dana Nally, Principal of Bedford Elementary School, for being selected as the 2023 National Distinguished Principal in Iowa.

In her 16 years as Principal at Bedford Elementary, Principal Nally has touched the lives of countless children and faculty. She has advocated for student wellbeing and academic

growth, and worked to create a high-quality, student-first learning environment.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending Principal Nally for her extraordinary leadership at Bedford Elementary School. Great leaders surround themselves with great staff, which in turn inspires greatness in their students. There is no doubt Principal Nally has been a force for good in the lives of countless young Iowans and the Bedford community.

HONORING VETERAN OF THE
YEAR, MR. CHARLES H. TALLEY,
JR.

HON. JENNIFER L. MCCLELLAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I'm excited to announce the winner of the first annual Virginia's Fourth Congressional District Veteran of the Year.

Mr. Charles H. Talley, Jr. dedicated 34 years of his life to the United States Army and continues to serve the district with integrity.

Mr. Talley was in the Pentagon during the September 11th terrorist attacks that shook our Nation before he deployed to Afghanistan to fight against those same attackers.

He served his country with distinction and rose through the ranks before his retirement in 2018 as a Chief Warrant Officer Four.

Now, he uses his specialized skills and years of experience in the Army and as an American Culinary Federation Certified Executive Chef to serve as the Quality Assurance Manager for the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence at Fort Gregg-Adams.

In this capacity, he works to assess and improve the food for the entire U.S. Army in the battlefield environment.

He also continues to serve and give back to our community as the current president of the Nu Omicron Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, where he organizes service events in Petersburg and the surrounding areas.

He devotes his time to lecture Warrant Officers every year and young aspiring professionals at Virginia State University.

As we celebrate Veterans Day this weekend, I am proud to name Chief Warrant Officer Four Charles H. Talley, Jr. as Virginia's Fourth Congressional District Veteran of the year.

HONORING WILLIE JAMES THOMAS,
SR. ON HIS 103RD BIRTHDAY

HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, St. Louis and I rise to wish a happy 103rd birthday to Willie James Thomas, Sr. On behalf of Missouri's First District, we are thankful for everything he is and everything he has done to provide for his family, neighbors, coworkers, and friends.

103 is a remarkable milestone and worthy of great celebration. Mr. Thomas has seen and lived through segments of history that most of us can only rely on through books and education, and from being in close community