

MISS ARKANSAS EBONY
MITCHELL

HON. J. FRENCH HILL
OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2022 Miss Arkansas winner, Ebony Mitchell.

Ebony was the 84th Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant winner, where she was awarded \$30,000 in scholarship funds provided by the Ted and Shannon Boy Skokos Foundation and \$75,000 in other areas.

Last December, she represented our great state at Miss America in Connecticut.

Becoming Miss Arkansas was a lifelong dream for Ebony.

Her journey started when she won the Miss University of Arkansas Princess pageant in 2007, which entered her into the Diamond State Princess mentorship program.

She had five appearances at Miss Arkansas before finally winning that title last year.

Aside from her accomplishments at Miss Arkansas, she graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in 2019 with her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

As Miss Arkansas, she will continue to lead her social impact by leading the "A Responsible Digital You" initiative, which seeks to keep the children of Arkansas online safe.

Ebony is a native of Harrison, Arkansas, where she's been a leader in civil rights and community spirit in her hometown.

I congratulate Ebony for her accomplishments, and I look forward to continuing to watch her proudly represent our great state of Arkansas.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAX L. MILLER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mr. MILLER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on roll call No. 162.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MR. GEORGE CRABTREE

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. George Crabtree, an energy trailblazer and fellow scientist whose over five-decade career at Argonne National Laboratory advanced a number of scientific disciplines and inspired colleagues and friends, here and around the world.

Born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, George eventually moved to Illinois where he graduated from Proviso West High School. He ultimately joined Argonne National Laboratory as a lab technician in 1964 and received his Ph.D.

George was widely recognized and admired as a brilliant materials scientist and champion

of superconducting materials and better batteries. As director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Joint Center for Energy Storage Research, George bolstered the national agenda to tackle the climate crisis and build a clean and equitable energy economy. He helped pioneer early research into high-temperature superconductors and in them, he discovered new phases of superconducting vortex matter. George's research on superconductors gained him recognition as a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society, and the National Academy of Sciences.

In addition to his work at Argonne, George was a professor of physics at Northern Illinois University for 13 years and a Professor of Physics at the University of Illinois at Chicago for 12 years.

George was a luminary in every sense of the word, and his work and dedication to the global scientific community will not be forgotten. Mr. Speaker, please join me as I celebrate the life and legacy of Mr. George Crabtree.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VVISAS FOR AFGHAN FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS ACT

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the "Special Immigrant Visas for Afghan Fulbright Scholars Act". The legislation would direct the State Department to automatically issue a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) for every Afghan who lived in the United States as a Fulbright Scholar and their immediate family members so they can escape persecution by the Taliban and relocate safely to the United States.

During Operation Enduring Freedom and the U.S. military drawdown from the region, my office helped to evacuate 251 individuals from Afghanistan. This includes American citizens, Afghan interpreters, and Special Immigrant Visa recipients. During the evacuation process, I helped evacuate over a dozen Afghan Fulbright Scholars who studied at the University of California, Davis. That experience exposed significant challenges for Afghan Fulbright Scholars with the current SIV process that underscored the need for the "Special Immigrant Visas for Afghan Fulbright Scholars Act."

In 2009, Congress passed the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (Title VI of Public Law 111-8) making a special class of American visas—known as Special Immigrant Visas—available to individual Afghan allies who supported the United States' mission in Afghanistan since the September 11, 2001 attacks. An SIV entitles a foreign national to relocate and live lawfully in the United States on a temporary basis with the option to settle permanently.

Fulbright Scholarships are one of the most vital U.S. cultural exchange programs that help to improve intercultural relations, diplomacy, and coordination between the United States and other countries. When my Congressional office learned that UC Davis' Fulbright participants were stuck attempting to es-

cape Afghanistan last year, we immediately worked around-the-clock with both the State Department and the U.S. military to evacuate these Afghan allies. That critical work revealed red tape that prevented current and former Afghan Fulbright Scholars from escaping Taliban rule. My 'Special Immigrant Visas for Afghan Fulbright Scholars Act' would automatically issue a Special Immigrant Visa to all current and former Afghan Fulbright Scholars to help any remaining Scholars and their immediate family members safely evacuate the region.

This is the right thing to do for our Afghan allies who stood with the United States against the Taliban and the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and I will work tirelessly to ensure see them brought safely to America.

NATIONAL HOSTAGE AND WRONGFUL DETAINEE DAY

HON. J. FRENCH HILL

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day.

I along with my Democratic colleague, Congresswoman HALEY STEVENS, reintroduced our legislation yesterday that establishes March 9 as National Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day.

On March 9, 2007, Robert Levinson disappeared in Iran.

He never returned home.

The commemoration of this national day brings attention to Americans that are being unjustly held as wrongful detainees and hostages in a foreign land.

Since the Levinson Act was signed into law two years ago, we've heard from families and organizations that are dedicated to helping bring wrongful detainees and hostages home and how the law is working.

We're learning more about how the Levinson Act is being used since it's become law.

And it's time for the House Foreign Affairs Committee to conduct oversight and see what potential changes should be made.

I helped create in the last Congress, the Congressional Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained Abroad, because one of my constituents disappeared on a visit to Syria. Majd Kamalmaz is still held by the Assad regime in Syria.

Majd and his wonderful family lived for a time in my hometown of Little Rock.

And every member of Congress is dedicated to the more than 50 Americans who right now are held against their will wrongfully in a country around the world.

We all want to bring home Majd and every other American that's being held wrongfully.

I'm proud to be a part of this Task Force and work alongside my friend, Congresswoman STEVENS.

I thank all those who are involved in their daily awareness to bring wrongful detainees and hostages around the world home to their families in our great country.

RECOGNIZING LOS ANGELES
POLICE OFFICER PAUL AVILA**HON. NORMA J. TORRES**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Paul Avila and his 25 years of public service and dedication to the City of Los Angeles as a Police Officer III. The calling to be a police officer is an incredibly difficult and important vocation of public service. Those who risk their lives for the good of the community are worthy of the highest respect and appreciation of our district, State, and Nation.

Paul entered the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Academy in 1998 and six months later he began his probation period in Northeast Los Angeles. Five years later, he was transferred to Southeast Los Angeles where he served for the rest of his career. Throughout his 25-year career, Paul rose through the ranks of LAPD. He trained new recruits as a field training officer, became an undercover vice investigator, and was a probation officer coordinator. In addition to his professional roles, Paul was the oldest member of his division's Baker to Vegas relay team that placed in the top 3 within the division every year.

This July, Paul is officially retiring. I hope that he gets to rest and enjoy time with his wife and family. We are grateful for his service to our community.

For his outstanding accomplishments, it is my honor to recognize Police Officer Paul Avila. His years of civic service and commitment to the city and the people of Los Angeles are worthy of the highest commendation.

HONORING THE EXEMPLARY SERVICE OF COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR CHRISTOPHER POCCIA DURING THE PEAK/CALF CANYON FIRE

HON. TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Command Sergeant Major Christopher Poccia for his service to the people of San Miguel and Mora counties during the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire.

The Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire started on April 6, 2022, when a U.S. Forest Service prescribed burn got out of control. The fire burned 341,735 acres between April and late August in the southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It was the largest wildfire in New Mexico history. In northern New Mexico many residents were displaced.

Command Sergeant Major Christopher Poccia was deployed to San Miguel and Mora counties with his National Guard unit for Task Force Wildfire. He distinguished himself as a trusted helper to community members who told me how grateful they were for his service during a time of devastation and uncertainty. His kindness, positive attitude, and willingness to serve will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

Every day, Christopher and his team worked at the improvised shelter. They delivered supplies, helped people to find assistance, and ventured to evacuated areas to assist those afraid to leave. He is an example of service, and service is an act of love. During his more than 90-day deployment, Christopher was away from his family. Today we also honor his wife Allison, his children Alec, Bella, and Jack, for the sacrifice they endured in his absence.

Christopher has returned to his work serving his community as a sergeant with the Albuquerque Police Department, where he is an exemplary model of leadership. At every turn he is at service to others and an example of how we can always look for the gaps where help is needed—and fill those spaces. We honor him and the other guardsmen and women of the National Guard who gave the most precious gift they had—their time—to help their neighbors during this crisis. They are heroes.

In line with the acts of service originating with the local community, President Biden signed my bill, the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act. This law provides \$3.95 billion in relief to victims of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire.

Sacrifice and heroism are cornerstones of America's history. Thanks to Command Sergeant Major Poccia, his team, and others like him, New Mexicans received the help they needed to survive and begin their journey to recovery. I thank and honor him for his selflessness dedication to service.

UNLEASHING AMERICAN ENERGY

HON. J. FRENCH HILL

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House has taken two important steps regarding our strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party, the CCP.

And Mr. Speaker, those steps on this House Floor were overwhelmingly bipartisan.

First, we created a select committee on the strategic competition between the United States and the CCP.

Our vision of an integrated, open, free world where people can celebrate their religion, people can travel, people can trade, and that strategic competition presses the western values of Europe, The United States with the more narrow authoritarian view of the Chinese Communist Party.

Secondly, we prevented oil being released from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) and that being sold to Communist China.

And today, over 320 Members of this body agreed with that, by voting yes on H.R. 22.

Now, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve has played an important role in U.S. energy and national security policy for four decades.

It was created in response to the Arab oil embargo in the early 1970s, which resulted in the tripling of oil prices at the time.

Since that time, the SPR has remained a backstop for the United States in case of oil supply disruption.

And Mr. Speaker, those on the other side of the aisle talked about America becoming the largest exporting nation in the world and somehow that is a bad thing.

And that we freed our ability to export oil and gas outside the U.S. as if that were a bad thing.

It's not.

But they are two completely different issues.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is there for an emergency affecting the United States, our citizens, our households, our industry, principally in case of a Gulf hurricane or a disruption in a pipeline or in some other aspect of oil and gas disruption from war or an accident somewhere in the world.

It's not meant to be supplying oil per say to everybody besides the United States.

In just the last year, President Biden has released 180 million barrels of our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, bringing it down to a 1985 level.

A four-decade low.

This is not smart economic policy or energy policy in this country.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, over 1 million barrels went to a Chinese affiliated company—at the same time China is reportedly holding its own crude reserve of over 900 million barrels.

So look, anyone with realistic knowledge and expectations in and around the debate about climate change or energy policy knows that this administration's energy policies have hurt American families, put our economy at risk, while at the same time weakening the globe's interest in fighting against climate change.

President Biden's failed policies to shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline, deny permits, discourage new drilling, discourage new pipeline construction, and through his bank and securities, Environmental, Social, Governance policies, so called "ESG policies" that too has discouraged badly needed capital investment to go to our energy industry and have weakened American global leadership and our strategic benefit, as referenced by my friends on the other side of the aisle, of energy independence.

President Biden has weakened our energy independence.

Instead, the Biden Administration has doubled down, even tripled down, on these policies that have not only raise the costs on every American, but do nothing in the long run to impact climate change.

While President Biden's nanny state regulators consider outlawing your gas stove in your home, or in your kitchen, or your restaurant, Republicans on this House Floor began their first step at unleashing an "all of the above" energy strategy.

So we have to let that sink in, that a federal regulator actually considered a serious policy proposal of banning you from having a gas stove in your home or in your restaurant.

I mean everyone in America was shaking their heads this week with the preposterous nature of that new idea from the Biden Administration.

Republicans believe in an "all of the above" strategy which benefits America and benefits the globe, and we must continue to invest in order to make it through a full global transition.

First, we have to keep investing in natural gas.

We have natural gas fields across our Nation, from the West Coast to the East Coast, in the heart of Pennsylvania, and of course, in the heart of New York State, where New York State's Democratic leadership refuses to let that be brought online.