

and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states and the Nation in the areas of business, education, law, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and the benefits from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves.

That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by so many great public figures that came before me. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said: "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

By this measure there are several other great young men and women who served as legislative fellows this Spring and Summer in my office. Each day, they exemplified the highest standards of excellence, bringing forth fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and an unrelenting drive to effect positive change within our cherished community. Their tireless efforts to address the diverse needs and pressing concerns of our constituents resonate deeply with the values we hold dear.

In the pursuit of serving the constituents of the 18th Congressional District of Texas, their contributions have been nothing short of remarkable.

That is why today I rise to pay tribute to 14 extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents of the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are:

Panashé Siachitema, Texas Tech University; Ramanpreet Kaur, Indiana University; Amy Arceo, Texas A&M University; Ainsley Gill, Vanderbilt University; Joel Crawford, Harvard University; Kevin Darmadi, George Washington University; Lindsey O'Neal, Payne International Development Fellowship, Niyonsaba Magnifique, Payne International Development Fellowship; Vanessa Rogers-Wright, Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program; Wilson Pemboh, Texas Tech University; Alexandra Wilhelm, Pepperdine University; Parker Milligan, Oglethorpe University; J Hardy, Howard University; Carrington Blair, Jackson State University.

Mr. Speaker, the energy, intelligence and idealism that these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interning in the offices of my colleague's help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of people like them the future of our country is bright, and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF OF POLICE
MICHAEL MERTENS FOR 33
YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE
OF NEW BALTIMORE

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of retired Chief Michael Mertens. Chief Mertens has dedicated 33 years of his life to the People of New Baltimore, leaving an indelible mark on the department and the lives of those he served. He began his journey in law enforcement in 1987, graduating with distinction from the Macomb Police Academy. Throughout his career, he exhibited exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to public safety.

As a certified Firearms Instructor, Chief Mertens ensured his fellow officers were well-trained and prepared for the challenges they faced. He courageously confronted the rising threat of drug-related crimes, leading successful investigations and making substantial steps against crime, including leading the largest LSD seizure in Michigan at that time.

Selected for the Macomb County's multi-jurisdictional Special Weapons and Tactics Team, Chief Mertens demonstrated considerable bravery and commitment to the protection of his community. His promotion to Sergeant in 2004 further showcased his leadership abilities and dedication to his colleagues.

Accepted into the esteemed FBI National Academy Associates in 2008, Chief Mertens solidified his outstanding qualifications and commitment to excellence. As Chief of the New Baltimore Police Department from 2019, he implemented crucial initiatives, securing resources and enhancing public safety measures.

Beyond doubt, Chief Michael Mertens' exceptional career in law enforcement has left a lasting impact on the City of New Baltimore. Today, we express our deepest gratitude and admiration for his unwavering commitment to public safety and his remarkable service to our community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BAYARD RUSTIN STAMP ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Bayard Rustin Stamp Act. This bill would direct the United States Postmaster General to issue a forever stamp to commemorate the life and work of Bayard Rustin. I introduce this bill with Congressman RITCHIE TORRES. We introduce this bill now to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which occurred on August 28, 1963, and the anniversary of Rustin's death, which occurred on August 24, 1987.

Born March 17, 1912, Bayard Rustin became one of the most important leaders in the 20th century civil rights movement. At a young age, Rustin learned the values of nonviolence and peacekeeping from his grandparents'

Quaker faith, and he would continue to build these values into his life as a civil rights movement leader.

Rustin attended City College of New York, where he joined a progressive club that aimed to remedy racial issues during turbulent times. His time with the club was short-lived, but it inspired him to join the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an organization that became a champion for labor rights, equity and world peace.

Rustin's time with the Fellowship of Reconciliation led him to become a leader in the 1947 "Journey to Reconciliation," where white and Black people across the South rode buses together to challenge segregation laws, a precursor to the Freedom Rides.

Rustin was an advisor in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s inner circle as King advocated pacifism and nonviolence for achieving equal treatment for African Americans. Rustin applied his brilliant strategic mind to execute aggressive, peaceful action in the civil rights movement and throughout his life as an activist.

His most important role was as the chief organizer of the historic March on Washington, the largest demonstration ever organized at the time, in which a quarter of a million people turned out to demand civil rights for African Americans.

In the years after the civil rights movement, Rustin, a gay man, inspired others to advocate for and to achieve rights for LGBTQ people. He remained a strategist and public speaker for workers' rights movements, including co-founding the A. Philip Randolph Institute, an organization for Black trade union members. Rustin remained committed to promoting social good, and advocating for the disenfranchised, until his death.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

CELEBRATING BRIGADIER GENERAL MATTHEW HIGER'S CAREER OF SERVICE

HON. MIKE GARCIA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a lifelong patriot and soldier who has proudly served our great Nation in uniform for more than 30 years. After a storied career marked by professional exceptionalism and taking on new challenges without hesitation, Brigadier General Matthew Higer will be enjoying his well-earned retirement. While the team at Edwards Air Force Base will surely miss his leadership, General Higer will undoubtedly be enjoying the opportunity to spend more time with loved ones.

Prior to his command of the 412th Test Wing, General Higer began his career attending some of our nation's finest military learning institutions, earning his commission from the Air Force Officer Reserve Training Corps at the University of Southern California and going on to attend the United States Army War College and the United States Naval Postgraduate School. Between his stints at these schools, General Higer served as a test pilot, evaluator pilot, and instructor pilot. No matter which role he was serving in at the time, Higer consistently distinguished himself from his fellow airmen through his hard work ethic and commitment to the pursuit of excellence. Over

the course of his career, General Higer has piloted 40 different types of aircraft and accrued over 3,000 military flight hours.

General Higer is concluding his admirable career at Edwards Air Force Base as commander of the 412th Test Wing, but this was not his first time in what is first time in California's "Aerospace Valley". He first came here as a student-pilot in 2003, attending the world-famous U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School and setting himself apart from the rest of his class with his skill and tenacity. While he went on to fulfill different roles around the country, General Higer couldn't stay away from Edwards AFB for long. He returned in 2017 and served as Commandant for the same test pilot school he graduated from as a young soldier, and later ascended to the position of Commander for the 412th Test Wing. Under his leadership, Edwards Air Force Base has remained the center of the flight testing universe, overseeing the testing of such programs as the F-16, T-38, T-7 A, F-22, F-35, C-12, C-17, KC-135, KC-46, B-1, B-2, B-52, B-21. Because of the work of General Higer and the brave men and women under his command, our nation is better prepared and equipped for the future and positioned to exceed our enemies in next-generation air dominance.

Once again, I want to recognize and sincerely thank Brigadier General Higer for his lifetime of service to our great Nation. I know myself, our community, and all those at the 412th Test Wing will be wishing him nothing but happiness and prosperity in his retirement.

HONORING THE STAFFORD NAACP FOR 67 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Stafford County NAACP in honor of 67 years of service to the community.

Founded in 1956, the Stafford County NAACP has worked tirelessly "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination," working to build a better future for everyone in Stafford County.

As the first and longest-serving president of the Stafford County NAACP, Frank White, Sr. laid the groundwork for this branch's long-term commitment to service. His legacy continues through his son, Frank White, Jr.—an active member.

Under the current leadership of President Yolanda Roussel, the Stafford County NAACP continues to be a beacon in the community through its activism, partnerships with local churches, support for Black-owned businesses, voter registration drives, and community forums on African American history, public education, and mental health.

The Stafford County NAACP brings the entire community together for large celebrations—including the Stafford County NAACP Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration and the Stafford County NAACP Juneteenth Commemoration and Celebration. These events would not have been possible without the hard work of its members.

The Stafford County NAACP has demonstrated a fervent commitment to our communities and an extraordinary devotion to the strength and prosperity of our Commonwealth. As the U.S. Representative for Virginia's Seventh District, I am honored to recognize this organization for its tremendous record of service to Stafford County—and I thank the Stafford County NAACP for building a stronger Virginia.

HONORING THE CAREER OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JUDITH ROBERTSON

HON. JEFF DUNCAN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable career of Lieutenant Commander Judith Robertson. Lieutenant Commander Robertson, a resident of Easley for nearly three decades, was the first female Physician Assistant in the United States Navy and a trailblazer in her field.

In 1974, Lieutenant Commander Judith Robertson entered the United States Navy and later graduated from the Sheppard Air Force Base's Physician Assistant Program with a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Nebraska. Ultimately, earned the title of the first female Physician Assistant, paving the way for countless women to follow in her footsteps. During her time in the U.S. Navy, she used her knowledge and training to provide OB/GYN services to Vietnam refugees at Talega Camp Pendleton, California. Her dedication and commitment to serving her country is evident in her 30-plus years of active service, during which she exemplified the highest standards of professionalism and excellence. For her service, she was awarded three Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, two National Defense Service medals, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Good Conduct Medal, and the Humanitarian Service Medal.

Since she retired from active duty in 1998, Lieutenant Commander Robertson's passion for helping others has not waned. Since settling down in Easley, South Carolina, she has continued to contribute to her community as a volunteer at Easley Baptist Hospital, selflessly giving her time and expertise to assist those in need. Her humility and willingness to serve are attributes that make her an invaluable member of her community.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Commander Judith Robertson's tireless dedication and unwavering commitment to service, in both the United States Navy and Easley Baptist Hospital, have left a lasting impact on my constituency. It is a privilege to celebrate the service of Lieutenant Commander Robertson and the barriers she has broken through her service in the United States Navy. This has made her an inspiration and role model for countless young women and service members. I am honored to represent the third district of South Carolina and to celebrate the exceptional individuals who make a difference in our community and country.

RECOGNIZING CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to recognize the impact of Calvary Baptist Church of Buffalo. Calvary Baptist will celebrate its 85th anniversary on September 15, 2023, which will mark several decades of critical service to our community and its residents.

Calvary began on Clinton Street with Rev. Polite in 1938, and through the years, has become a staple of the Western New York region. This church is compassionate and dedicated to the mission of helping others, and they do this through local and global leadership that focuses on fostering strong intergenerational disciples. The efforts in Christian education have made significant impacts on the lives of many, and the nurturing of all followers (of every generation) is a testament to the love and unity within this church family. Every day, our community ought to recognize and appreciate the leadership and members of Calvary for their selfless work and devotion. Their contributions to the betterment of our community have not gone unnoticed, and their impact extends far beyond the walls of the congregation.

Reverend Corey Bernard Gibson of Buffalo, New York, was named as the seventh and current pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church. Pastor Gibson has continued to carry out community service, catering to both spiritual and social needs. This includes the continuation of the Community Outreach Day and the establishment of a scholarship for the local community high school, along with various other events throughout the year that focus on benefiting the children of Buffalo. It is critically important to recognize such efforts, and I ask that you join me in thanking the leaders and membership of Calvary Baptist, alike, for their successful endeavors over the last 85 years.

RECOGNIZING THE 85TH BIRTHDAY OF JOHN TOWNSEND

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish John Townsend a happy 85th birthday.

John is a native of Talladega County, Alabama. He resides in Fayetteville with his wife, Lola M. Townsend. They have been married for 56 years. He has one son, John Townsend, Jr., who is married to Brenda Townsend and one daughter, Victoria Cook, who is married to Alfred Cook, Sr.

Mr. Townsend is blessed with six grandchildren: Jalane, Daria, Alfred, Jr., Johntavis, Cameron, and Alexandria. He has 8 great-grandchildren with the youngest 2 of them twin boys.

Mr. Townsend worked for Avondale Mills for more than 29 years before he retired. He also worked for Parker Fertilizer for many years.

In his free time, Mr. Townsend enjoys gardening and spending time with his family. To