

Mojave Desert, where he contributed to vital rocket experiments, and to the Marshall Islands, where he repaired aircraft electronics. He was honorably discharged in 1946.

In 1954, Russell married Ginger McDaniel, and together they built a loving family, raising two sons and a daughter, along with a growing number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Russell's professional career spanned over three decades with Montgomery Ward, where he made significant contributions throughout the Midwest. His commitment to community service was unwavering; he actively participated in local Chambers of Commerce and Merchants Associations. In Flint, Michigan, where he spent his later career, Russell left an indelible mark on the community. Notably, he served as Chairman of a committee that collaborated with then-Mayor Jim Rutherford to plan the inaugural Crim Race in Flint. Additionally, he dedicated six years to the Whaley Board for Children and served on the board of the YMCA.

As a devoted member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Flint, Russell held the position of Vestry member and worked alongside First Presbyterian Church and Court Street Methodist Church to establish the Ministry of Crossover Outreach. This initiative addressed the needs of the local community by providing clothing, food, and referral services.

Throughout his remarkable century-long life, Russell Matar has exemplified the core values of family, community, and service. His legacy of steadfast support and commitment to those around him truly sets him apart.

I invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the life of Russell Matar, a true pillar of our community and a shining testament to the enduring spirit of service.

HONORING THE REPUBLIC DAY OF KAZAKHSTAN

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the Republic Day of Kazakhstan, commemorating Kazakhstan's declaration of sovereignty on October 25, 1990. This pivotal moment paved the way for Kazakhstan's eventual independence from the Soviet Union and symbolizes the nation's enduring commitment to self-determination, prosperity, and peace.

Kazakhstan's early alignment with the West has significantly influenced its development. Over the past three decades, Kazakhstan has transformed into a thriving nation with a strong economy, a growing international presence, and a robust partnership with the United States.

The relationship between Kazakhstan and the United States is rooted in the shared values of democracy, economic growth, and mutual respect. As we celebrate Kazakhstan's achievements, we reaffirm our commitment to working together in addressing global challenges and promoting peace, security, and economic development.

Kazakhstan continues to be a pillar of stability in Central Asia, emerging as a global leader in nuclear nonproliferation, peace-

keeping, and fostering regional cooperation. As a net contributor to peace and security not only in the region, but also globally, Kazakhstan is committed to addressing global challenges and promoting international stability.

As a religiously diverse country, it serves as a case study of peaceful coexistence. Kazakhstan hosts the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has become an important venue for fostering dialogue among various faiths and serves as a unique platform for interfaith and intercultural cooperation. At a tumultuous time in the world, this event serves as an important opportunity for faith leaders to work to promote and protect freedom of religious expression and worship in Kazakhstan and in all nations.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's commitment to political and societal reforms is commendable. Despite external pressures, Kazakhstan has remained a peaceful and stabilizing force in Central Asia, exemplifying its dedication to democracy and Western ideals.

Kazakhstan remains a reliable and trusted partner of the United States, particularly as an active member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This long-standing partnership highlights the importance of advancing efforts to establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR), ensuring that Kazakhstan's economic growth is fully acknowledged and supported within the global marketplace.

As we look to the future, the United States and Kazakhstan are poised to deepen their partnership through continued dialogue, trade, and collaboration on shared goals. Together, we are committed to fostering peace, security, and prosperity, not only in Central Asia but on the global stage.

RECOGNIZING METRA COMMUTER RAILROAD'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SEAN CASTEN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Metra Commuter Railroad on its 40th anniversary of providing reliable, affordable, and safe transportation services throughout the state and for residents of Illinois' 6th Congressional District.

In the last forty years, Metra has made significant progress revitalizing and rebuilding stations, tracks, and signals, purchasing new locomotives and railcars, and modernizing and stabilizing and expanding services across the region. Metra also provided a crucial lifeline during the global pandemic.

I commend Metra on these advancements and was proud to lead the Illinois Delegation's support efforts for its recent Federal Transit Administration's Rail Vehicle Replacement Program grant application. Metra was selected as one of only three recipients nationwide to receive a grant. This \$100 million federal investment will support the procurement of new, multi-level railcars to replace those from the 1970s and improve the safety, comfort, and accessibility to all passengers boarding Metra trains.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to the dedicated professionals at Metra who have continuously serviced Illinois with

vital transportation as they celebrate forty years of service. I thank Metra Commuter Railroad, and wish them a happy anniversary.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: VALERIE HAMILTON

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize Valerie Hamilton, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades, but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Valerie Hamilton has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

Since 2012, Valerie—owner, founder, and executive director of Children of God Educational Services—has been a driving force in transforming early education and childcare in Bristol Borough. With a relentless focus on strengthening family bonds and immersing children in rich, local experiences, Valerie has built more than a childcare service—she has cultivated a foundation for lifelong success. Every day, Valerie and her devoted team go above and beyond to provide children with the skills, opportunities, and confidence they need to thrive. Through her carefully crafted Preschool, After School, and Summer Camp programs, she not only enriches young minds but also offers critical support to working parents, empowering families to succeed.

Valerie's mission is rooted in more than education—she shapes character, instilling integrity, compassion, and a deep sense of community in every child she serves. Her unwavering commitment to high-quality care and her ability to inspire and uplift have left a lasting mark on countless children and families. Her work is not just childcare; it is a beacon of hope, opportunity, and purpose, changing lives and building a stronger future for our community.

It is through the work of people like Valerie Hamilton that our communities thrive and our Nation grows stronger. Her service, given without expectation of recognition, stands as a testament to the belief that one individual's dedication can ripple through the lives of many, sparking change, fostering resilience, and inspiring hope. Today, we honor Valerie Hamilton not just for her remarkable deeds but for who she is—a true hero in every sense of the word.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to Valerie Hamilton for her extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional individual, whose leadership

and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May her example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

THE INVASIVE SPECIES RESPONSE ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a critical and growing challenge that severely impacts our environment and has widespread ripple-effect consequences beyond: invasive species.

This challenge threatens the delicate balance of our ecosystems, as invasive species can outcompete, prey on or introduce diseases to our native flora and fauna. The consequences of these disruptions are severe, leading to declines in biodiversity, diminishing the resilience of our ecosystems in the face of environmental change. These effects in turn can cause widespread economic damage; agriculture and forestry would be just two examples.

Hawaii in particular faces unique challenges from invasive species. Its isolation has led to the evolution of many endemic species that are found nowhere else on Earth. Unfortunately, these native species often lack the defenses to compete with or resist the pressures of invasive plants and animals, which can rapidly alter ecosystems and displace local species. In Hawaii, invasive species have caused significant ecological damage, threatening the survival of native birds and plants. Protecting Hawaii's unique biodiversity is not just an environmental necessity—it is a cultural imperative that reflects the identity and heritage of the Hawaiian people.

Invasive species are not just a localized problem; they pose a significant threat to the integrity of our natural world. Addressing this crisis requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach, focusing on prevention, early detection, and effective management strategies to safeguard our vulnerable ecosystems.

In response to this urgent need, I am jointly introducing the Invasive Species Response Act with my colleague, Rep. JIM MOYLAN of Guam. This legislation will codify the existing Invasive Species Strike Teams program currently operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). These specialized teams play an essential role in managing emerging invasive species, employing strategies tailored to local conditions across the National Wildlife Refuge System. With 21 teams strategically positioned in various FWS regions, they are on the front lines, addressing the unique challenges posed by invasive species.

The Invasive Species Response Act signifies a transformative shift within the FWS, moving us from a reactive, species-by-species approach to a more strategic, system-wide framework for managing emerging invasive species. Key provisions of the bill include formally establishing the Invasive Species Strike Teams program, which will create a stable and legally supported framework to ensure consistent funding and enhance our management efforts. The act also mandates enhanced co-

ordination and reporting through integrated systems and standardized procedures, ensuring transparency and enabling us to track progress with annual reports to Congress and the public. Furthermore, it authorizes \$15 million annually from Fiscal Year 2025 through 2029, aligning with current FWS investment levels to support ongoing initiatives.

This legislation is a crucial step forward in protecting our natural resources and enhancing our capacity to respond swiftly to the threats posed by invasive species.

I urge my colleagues to lend their support to our Invasive Species Response Act. Together, we can ensure the preservation of our ecosystems and promote a resilient future for our environment.

Mahalo.

CELEBRATING BRAD JACKSON'S RECORD OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

HON. RUDY YAKYM III

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor, recognize, and congratulate my good friend, business leader and builder, devoted public servant, and Kosciusko County Commissioner Brad Jackson as he prepares to retire as County Commissioner at the end of this year after 28 years in elected office.

Brad has been a close personal friend of mine for more than a decade and a committed and effective champion for all things Kosciusko County for even longer. From his work as a second-generation homebuilder and experienced business owner to his service in elected office, Brad's long-standing commitment to meeting the needs of Kosciusko County Hoosiers has been deep and unwavering. Quite simply, Brad is the kind of person that you want in your corner and serving in government and making decisions that affect people's lives.

Brad's belief in and adherence to conservative principles and values has helped keep Kosciusko County growing and on the move during Brad's nearly three-decade tenure as County Commissioner. Fiscal discipline, low taxes, preventing unnecessary regulations on businesses and job creators, and support for law enforcement and keeping crime low have all been hallmarks of Brad's approach to politics and public service. Most of all, his love for community, his family, and God has kept Brad grounded in the things that matter, and it has made him a leader who is admired and respected by so many.

As Brad's career in public life comes to a close, I am reminded of the saying "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him." I believe this quote applies uniquely well to County Commissioner Brad Jackson. The Kosciusko County community is unquestionably better off thanks to this good man with a servant's heart. Brad has not only built countless construction projects in his career, he has also built an incredible legacy and a stronger foundation for Kosciusko County to stand and grow upon going forward.

I join Hoosiers throughout Indiana's Second Congressional District in expressing our grati-

tude to Brad for his many years of dedicated service. I wish Brad a very happy retirement and him, his wife Lynnette, their two sons, and their extended family all the very best going forward.

COMMEMORATING THE ST. LOUIS ALUMNAE AND SAINT LOUIS METROPOLITAN ALUMNAE CHAPTERS OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, along with the people of St. Louis, I rise today to honor and recognize the esteemed Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., particularly the members of the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter and the Saint Louis Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter, on the occasion of Delta Day, celebrated on October 18, 2024, in the City of St. Louis.

Founded in 1913 at Howard University by 22 courageous collegiate women, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has been a beacon of social justice, leadership, and public service. The Founders' first public act—marching alongside the suffragettes to achieve voting rights for women—set the tone for more than a century of advocacy and action. Today, the sorority continues to be a transformative force in communities across the globe, guided by the powerful theme: Forward With Fortitude: Engaging Our Sisterhood, Empowering Our Communities, Elevating Our Impact.

The St. Louis Alumnae Chapter and Saint Louis Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter have proudly embodied the sorority's mission of service and advocacy in our region. Their dedication to public service has improved countless lives in St. Louis, as they have stood in the vanguard of social, educational, and economic justice. Whether it is through mentorship programs, voter engagement initiatives, or charitable efforts, Deltas are at the heart of helping to make our communities stronger.

On this Delta Day, we recognize our remarkable Deltas for their tireless efforts and lasting contributions. As they gather together, we honor their ongoing work to safeguard the legacy of those who came before them and to build a better future for those who will follow.

On behalf of Missouri's First District, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and in recognition of October 18, 2024, as Delta Day in the City of St. Louis. May we continue to support and uplift each and every member and the communities they so passionately serve.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: AMY KEIPER-SHAW

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—