

develop AI tools for early screening of children with Dysgraphia and Dyslexia. This groundbreaking project aims to provide teachers with AI-based intervention tools to efficiently help them overcome their limitations.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating Dr. Venu Govindaraju as Person of the Year by the Council of Heritage and Arts of India. His contributions have not only advanced AI research but also demonstrated its profound impact on industries and communities. Dr. Govindaraju's leadership exemplifies the transformative power of science, innovation, and technology in addressing real-world challenges that have left an indelible mark on our city, and we are all the better for it.

REMEMBERING MARY HAMMER, A
PIVOTAL FOUNDER OF MOUNTAIN
COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Mary Hammer, a beloved community leader. She was a steadfast advocate for families in the San Lorenzo Valley and founded the Mountain Community Resources, originally known as the Valley Resource Center. Originally from Alameda, Ms. Hammer embodied our community values of positivity and hard work.

Ms. Hammer attended UC Berkeley, and shortly after graduating, she traveled abroad to teach in Germany where she met her husband, Joe. In 1965 Mary and Joe settled in the San Lorenzo Valley, a place very dear to Mary. She began teaching in San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District leaving a lasting impact on those she taught. While raising her family, Ms. Hammer quickly began to become an active leader in her community.

Engaging in local political campaigns, her efforts not only safeguarded vital water resources but also played a key role in shaping Santa Cruz County. As an environmentalist, her leadership was vital for emergency responses when a devastating flood and storms barreled through the community in 1982 and 1983. Mary's dedicated advocacy pushed local leaders to prioritize emergency preparedness, setting the stage for the Neighborhood Survival Network and Volunteer Emergency Preparedness Project.

Her leadership at Valley Resource Center as the center's first Executive Director guided the community through multiple natural disasters and paved the way for the center to transform from a volunteer-led organization to a nonprofit. Ms. Hammer Received the Outstanding Public Service Award from FEMA in Washington, D.C., which was one of many achievements she would go on to receive.

As a founding leader of the Valley Women's Club of San Lorenzo Valley, Ms. Hammer championed efforts for natural resource preservation and disaster preparedness. Today, Mountain Community Resources provides essential services such as food, clothing, counseling, legal assistance, and parenting classes to residents in need.

Mary loved being with family and friends, teaching, reading, and exploring nature as an avid cyclist, camper, and hiker. Mary is sur-

vived by her children, Eric and Lisa, and her grandchildren, Ruby, Charlie, and Nicole. She now joins her beloved husband, Joe, whom she fondly called "Joey."

COMMENDING COMMISSIONER
WAYNE GOODWIN

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Wayne Goodwin, a dedicated public servant whose exemplary work as Commissioner of the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles has made a lasting impact on our state.

Wayne Goodwin has served North Carolina in many capacities, including four terms in the State House and eight years as Commissioner of Insurance. Since being appointed DMV Commissioner in 2022, he has tackled the challenges of a demanding agency with leadership, vision, and a commitment to improving services for all North Carolinians.

Under Commissioner Goodwin's leadership, the DMV has seen significant progress. He's made customer service a top priority, implementing extended business hours, introducing DMV self-service kiosks, and expanding online services. These innovations have reduced wait times and provided more convenience for citizens across the state. His efforts to address the agency's staffing shortages, reducing a 30 percent vacancy rate to 12 percent, speak to his dedication to supporting state employees.

A native of Hamlet and a Morehead Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill, Wayne Goodwin's longstanding dedication to public service, from his time as a young lawmaker to his leadership at the DMV, has greatly benefited our state.

I'm honored to recognize Wayne Goodwin for his extraordinary service and the lasting contributions he's made to the people of North Carolina.

RECOGNIZING MICHELLE HINES

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michelle Hines on her retirement from 33 years of working in community service with the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD).

A Logan County native, Michelle was born, raised, and resides in Auburn, Kentucky. After graduating from Logan County High School and Western Kentucky University, Michelle's first job out of college was with the Barren River Area Development District. In her tenure, which spans over three decades, Michelle has been a faithful servant to her community, advocating and supporting citizens throughout the region she oversees. She has been part of many critical initiatives including supporting the 2021 Tornado Relief fund, countless food drives, and BRADD's Veterans Directed Care Services expansion.

Mrs. Hines can best be described by all who know her as devoted, humble, and ready to

act. Her devotion throughout her career has inspired many people and enriched the lives of countless constituents. I want to thank Michelle for her work that has put the needs of others first and give recognition to her tenured career as she enjoys retirement spending more time with her husband, Kevin, and daughter, Rachel.

RECOGNIZING MY 2024 FALL IN-
TERN CLASS FOR THEIR SERV-
ICE TO ILLINOIS' 13TH CONGRES-
SIONAL DISTRICT

HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding class of interns who supported my office during the Fall 2024 term. Whether they were working in the bustling U.S. Capitol or amongst the cornfields of Illinois, their contributions to Illinois' 13th Congressional District have made a significant impact.

In my Washington Office, I was honored to work alongside Daryl Salinas, Wedad Osman, Stella Linn, and Sophia Hinich. These four interns have worked tirelessly to support my staff, skillfully navigating the complexities of working on Capitol Hill. They have been instrumental in managing direct correspondence with our constituents, drafting numerous memos and letters, and assisting with in-depth policy research. I am especially grateful for their work in preparing my office to transition to the 119th Congress.

Back in Illinois, I was honored to work with Avery Martin in my Champaign Office. Her commitment to constituent service by assisting my casework team has been tremendous, and I applaud her for the dedication she showed to the people of Central and Southern Illinois while also being a full-time student at the University of Illinois.

The impact that these five individuals left in my office will be felt for years to come as we transition to the 119th Congress, and we will be very sad to say farewell to this spectacular group of interns. I thank Daryl, Wedad, Stella, Sophia, and Avery for their service. I wish them all the best as they continue their professional and academic journeys.

HONORING STATE REPRESENTA-
TIVE ESTHER HAYWOOD

HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I along with the people of St. Louis, rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Esther Jean Hill Haywood, a trailblazer, educator, public servant, and unwavering advocate for civil rights and social justice. Born in Memphis, Tennessee on January 15, 1940, Esther's early commitment to service shaped a lifetime of transformational contributions to her community and our nation. She dedicated herself to fostering equity in education, leading initiatives for underserved youth, and tirelessly advocating for social

progress. Esther Haywood's life exemplifies the power of purpose, passion, and perseverance.

As an educator, Esther broke barriers in the Shelby County Public School System, becoming one of the first African-American teachers to integrate its classrooms in 1967. Her pioneering efforts set the stage for generations of students and educators who followed. Her passion for educational equity continued in East St. Louis, Illinois, where she dedicated over 27 years to uplifting young minds as a math specialist, an organizer of student trips to Washington, D.C., and a mentor to countless youth.

Beyond education, Esther's service extended to leadership in civic and community organizations. As President of the St. Louis County Branch of the NAACP, she reactivated and expanded its influence, earning national acclaim. Her tenure as a Missouri State Representative demonstrated her commitment to justice and equity through legislation combating hate crimes, advocating for educational funding, and commemorating the contributions of civil rights icons. Esther's advocacy reached global audiences through her role as an Ambassador for Peace, reflecting her belief in the universal power of community and unity.

Esther Haywood's legacy is a testament to her boundless love for her family and community. Her devotion to her husband, Edward, their two daughters, and her grandchildren, exemplified the values of family, mentorship, and enduring strength. Her unparalleled contributions, whether in education, public service, or civil rights, will forever inspire those who follow in her footsteps. On behalf of Missouri's First Congressional District, I am honored to celebrate the life of a truly remarkable woman who embodied the spirit of service and uplifted everyone around her.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I had an emergency medical procedure and was absent from votes on December 10, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll call No. 493; YEA on Roll call No. 494; YEA on Roll call No. 495; YEA on Roll call No. 496; YEA on Roll call No. 497; and YEA on Roll call No. 498.

CELEBRATING DR. CHARLES BREITHAUP

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Dr. Charles Breithaupt for a lifetime of service to Texas education and student athletics. His active leadership in advancing interscholastic opportunities for young people and his steadfast commitment to student safety exemplify the very best of Texas.

Dr. Breithaupt has dedicated over 16 years as the Vice President of the University of

Texas at Austin and as the Executive Director of Texas' University Interscholastic League (UIL), supervising academic, athletic, and music competitions at thousands of schools across Texas. Throughout his tenure, he has made several pioneering achievements, including the implementation of a six-conference alignment, the establishment of the National High School Football Summit and the formation of the UIL Medical Advisory Committee. The Committee, under his leadership, has developed protocols mitigating health risks for students in high-impact sports.

Dr. Breithaupt's 50-year career exemplifies his passion for student success. Before working as Executive Director, Dr. Breithaupt served 17 years as a public-school teacher, coach, athletic director, and principal in Southeast Texas. He currently serves on the Texas Interscholastic League Foundation Board, which awards hundreds of scholarships annually to students attending Texas colleges and universities.

Dr. Breithaupt's numerous accolades include being named 1991 Texas State Coach of the Year, inductions into the Texas Basketball and Texas High School Football Halls of Fame, and two Lone Star Emmy Awards for his role as Fox Sports Southwest High School Spotlight Show Executive Producer.

I join Dr. Breithaupt's family, friends, and colleagues in celebrating his unwavering dedication and contributions. His efforts reflect his outstanding leadership and commitment to fostering a legacy of opportunity and achievement for Texas students.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NICK LaLOTA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. LaLOTA. Mr. Speaker, I regret to have missed this vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 499.

RECOGNIZING GRAYFORD F. PAYNE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Grayford F. Payne on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Department of the Interior after 38 years of Federal service.

Grayford Payne has spent his career serving the American people in a number of roles within the federal government. Shortly after graduating from George Mason University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Mr. Payne served as an Auditor-in-Charge in the Naval Audit Service. In this role, he was responsible for audit and program reviews of Department of Defense National Security Science and Technology programs.

After eight years, Mr. Payne joined the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission where he served seven years as Director of Financial Services. During his time there, he was in

charge of the Commission's financial accounting system and its automated revenue billing and collection system.

In 2002, he joined the Department of the Interior as the Deputy Chief Financial Officer for Indian Affairs where he was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer which included all financial, accounting, budget, procurement, and property functions. He was promoted just three years later to the role of Chief Financial Officer and then again to the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary-Management in 2008.

There, he oversaw the planning and execution of the Indian Affairs \$4.5 billion annual budget, and his organizational responsibilities encompassed all administrative functions to include finance, budget, acquisition, property management, human resources, homeland security, planning, audit and evaluation, and more.

Mr. Payne moved to the Bureau of Reclamation within the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2010 and was named Reclamation's Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Administration and Budget, a role he held until his retirement. He oversaw agency resources, policy formulation, finance, law enforcement, dam safety, program and budget, and more. He also served as Reclamation's Chief Financial Officer.

Throughout his public service, Mr. Payne received numerous awards for his dedication and leadership. He was honored with the Secretary of the Interior's Gold Leadership Award in 2007, Bronze Leadership Award in 2006, and Silver Leadership Award in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Grayford F. Payne on his retirement. I am proud to represent Mr. Payne in Congress, and I thank him and his family, wife Sharon and children Robert, Katherine, Elizabeth, and Carolyn, for his honorable 38 years of service to our Nation.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW GLEASON—EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, I have the privilege of recognizing and celebrating Matthew Gleason for achieving the great rank of Eagle Scout after 13 years of steadfast commitment to the Scout Oath and Law. Matthew's scouting career began as a Cub Scout in the fall of 2011, where he rapidly ascended to leadership roles, including Assistant Patrol Leader and Patrol Leader. Early on, he earned the prestigious Arrow of Light award, a testament to his dedication and hard work. Matthew's commitment to community service has been nothing short of exemplary. He logged nearly 200 hours helping neighbors, friends, and strangers alike, demonstrating an inspiring dedication to those around him. In addition to his service, he has shown impressive physical fitness by completing a challenging 33-mile hike through rigorous terrain, successfully reaching every mission-required destination. For his Eagle Scout project, he dedicated over 160 hours to the Aura Volunteer Fire Company, where he built a shed for their antique fire truck, preserving