

Paul was determined to see it happen and I am proud to have been a small part in ensuring there was visibility for the Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Marana.

I am grateful to Paul for his own service, his continued advocacy, and his unwavering dedication to his fellow veterans.

His work will forever inspire us to strive for a better world for all who have served our country.

#### RECOGNIZING ROBERT O'CONNELL

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions made in our community by one of my constituents, Robert "Bob" O'Connell, who has been a resident of Citrus County for 45 years. Believing that one makes a life out of what they give rather than what they get, Bob has been an active volunteer for approximately 30 non-profit organizations, including: The Homosassa Lions Club, The Citrus Pregnancy Center, the Citrus County Abuse Shelter, Habitat for Humanity, Day Star, Citrus County Blessings, the Sheriffs Youth Ranch, United Way of Citrus County, and the Path of Citrus County. A truly humble public servant, Bob finds creative ways to serve others, never seeking notoriety or praise. He has undoubtedly left a lasting imprint in the lives of countless neighbors in Citrus County who will never know the tremendous effort he has put forth on their behalf. Part of what makes our country so great is the willingness of ordinary Americans to go above and beyond to selflessly give back to others. Volunteerism is one of the cornerstones of our society and part of the fabric that unites us.

It is clear that Mr. Robert "Bob" O'Connell has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for his service.

#### THANKING MARK DOBBINS FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

#### HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mark Dobbins of Prince William County, VA on the occasion of his retirement on January 16, 2024, after more than 33 years of service to the United States House of Representatives.

During Mark's tenure of 33 years, he has worked for the Office of the Clerk and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. He retired as a Purchasing Agent Manager for the Office of Acquisitions Management within the CAO.

Mark began his House career in 1990 as an employee with the Clerk of the House as an Office Equipment Counselor, later being promoted to Senior Office Equipment Counselor in 1993. In 1996, Mark began a career with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer as a Supervisor of Inventory Counselors. In 2002, Mark became a Supervisor with Acquisitions Management and was later promoted to Manager of the Small Purchasing Team.

As a Manager for the Small Purchasing Team within the Office of Acquisitions Management, Mark was responsible for oversight and managing the process required to efficiently purchase quality equipment, furniture, office supplies and related items for the House community at-large. He and his team carried out their responsibilities in compliance with the policies and procedures adopted by the Committee on House Administration and the Chief Administrative Officer.

In retirement, Mark has plans to stay active, spending more time with family and taking time to enjoy some travelling.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Mark in grateful recognition of and appreciation for his many years of dedicated service to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish him many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

#### HONORING THE CAREER OF THOMAS CLAPSADLE, JR.

#### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Thomas "Tommy" Clapsadle, Jr. of Waterford, Connecticut who is retiring this month as Chief of the Naval Submarine Base Fire Department after 35 years of service. Thomas's outstanding leadership has helped the US Naval Submarine Base maintain its high standard of safety for decades. His commitment to take care of those around him and make his community a better place will be sincerely missed.

Growing up next to the Goshen Fire Department in Waterford, Thomas was destined to have a long career as a firefighter. Thomas became the first 15-year-old junior member in the department, drawn to a career helping others. After getting his firefighting and Emergency Medical Technician certification in 1989, Thomas was hired by the Naval Submarine Base Fire Department where he has been ever since.

Thomas has remained a devoted protector of the submarine base, serving 35 years in many different roles. When he started, Thomas was immediately recognized for his attention to detail and caring disposition and he was promoted several times. Thomas became a driver at 23 years old and was soon promoted to captain only a few years later in 1995.

Thomas's impressive work ethic and leadership qualities set him up for success as captain. In this role, he was responsible for presenting a collaborative firefighter safety standard to the Groton Fire Officers Association. Here, Thomas helped build a specialized Firefighter Assist and Search Team (FAST) to facilitate a response in case a firefighter becomes trapped or disoriented in the line of duty. In 2008, at 38 years old, Thomas was promoted again to District Fire Chief, the role he retires from this month after 16 years. It was not just Thomas's extensive experience that prompted these promotions, but also his incredible leadership and genuine concern for the safety, well-being, and quality of life of firefighters, sailors, and families.

Thomas has always been willing to share his extensive knowledge of fire safety, particu-

larly in the highly specialized mission in the submarine domain, with other firefighters in Connecticut, building professional community partnerships wherever possible.

In 2012, his unique skills were put to the test when the Naval Submarine Base Fire Department helped respond to combat the devastating USS Miami fire in the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Thomas immediately jumped into action and had to use his quick thinking for a plan to keep the submarine base protected while 12 of their own went to assist with the fire in Maine. The Naval base firefighters drove through the night to Portsmouth and successfully suppressed the raging fire that destroyed the USS Miami, a Los Angeles Class Attack Submarine. Afterwards, Thomas made a point to work with local fire departments to train them to respond to a submarine fire in the case of an incident like the one in Maine.

Mr. Speaker, as the Congressman for southeastern Connecticut, a region that has rightfully earned the title "Submarine Capital of the World," I had the opportunity to work with him on issues dealing with the number of billets allowed by the Navy to staff the base firehouse. He was extremely knowledgeable, organized, and persistent in his efforts to get more positions approved by the Navy, which has made progress, but still requires steadfast advocacy for the wellbeing of his team. It was an honor to support his work that was always focused on the team he led.

In his free time, Thomas can be found on the water. Raised on the Long Island Sound in Waterford, he grew up fishing with his parents and found a love for captaining his own fishing ship. Thomas commissioned the M&M, a boat named for his sons Michael and Mitchell, to run a small business helping others enjoy a pastime he loves.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent leaders in the community like Mr. Clapsadle. Thomas's dedication to the Naval Submarine Base Fire Department has been guided by his goal to leave the fire department and its members in better shape than he found them. Thomas's departure will certainly leave large shoes to fill as he transitions into retirement with his wife Bobbette to spend more time with his sons Michael and Mitchell, stepchildren Danielle and Dominic, and two grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Thomas Clapsadle, Jr. on a well-earned retirement.

#### RECOGNIZING NILES KINNUNEN, JR.

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions made in our community by one of my constituents, Dr. Niles Kinnunen, Jr. Dr. Kinnunen has been a vital part of Pasco-Hernando State College (PHSC) and its Foundation since the institution's early days in 1975. Dr. Kinnunen served on the PHSC Foundation Board for 20 years before resigning in 2008. His unwavering leadership and commitment to the Foundation's mission led to his lifetime recognition as an Honorary Board Member. Being one of the

first dentists in west Pasco County, Dr. Kinnunen was instrumental in establishing the dental program at PHSC and still supports the program today. During the Foundation's recent comprehensive campaign, Dr. Kinnunen collaborated with PHSC staff, local dentists, and community stakeholders to implement a campaign focused on raising funds for PHSC's dental program. Today, he continues to support students enrolled in the dental hygiene program through scholarship assistance. In 1989, Dr. Kinnunen, along with the West Pasco Dental Association, initiated the establishment of the Jeffrey and Kathleen Kinnunen Scholarship at the PHSC Foundation in memory of his son Jeffrey and late wife Kathleen who was a dental hygienist. Since its establishment, the endowment has provided over \$30,000 in scholarship awards to PHSC students. Without scholarship support such as this, many students would not have the opportunity to attend PHSC and achieve their dreams. Dr. Kinnunen and his wife, Cherry, continue to support the Foundation through their gift of time, talent, and treasure. You can often find the Kinnunen's at a performing arts show at PHSC's West Campus and other Foundation events.

It is clear that Dr. Niles Kinnunen has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for his service.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE COMBATING IMPLICIT BIAS IN EDUCATION ACT

#### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Combating Implicit Bias in Education Act. This bill would create a \$30 million grant program for schools to train teachers, principals and other personnel on implicit bias with respect to actual or perceived race, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. This bill aims to reduce the effect of implicit bias on school discipline, academic achievement, and academic attainment.

In 2019, a report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that students of color with disabilities received far more severe and frequent punishment than their white counterparts. In 2017, the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality released a report finding that people disproportionately think of Black girls as more adult-like and less innocent compared to their white counterparts. This bias has been linked to harsher treatment of Black girls in schools.

Under this bill, the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences would evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the training.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### HONORING HERMELINDA SAPIEN

#### HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the accomplishments of Hermelinda Sapien.

Hermelinda dedicated 55 years to the Center for Employment Training, and for the past 25 years she has displayed her unwavering leadership as President and Executive Director.

The Center for Employment Training (CET) is an economic and community development corporation. Their job training and placement programs teach marketable skills to people of all educational levels and backgrounds, supporting them through the process of job placement. With 12 locations, including San Jose's, CET's impact is monumental.

Hermelinda's work with CET began as an Administrative Assistant, and her commitment served her well as she moved up to Human Resources Director, Chief Administrative Officer, Deputy Director, and ultimately, President and CEO.

CET's ability to work with our community and support the dignity of self-sufficiency is largely due to Hermelinda's hard work. She dedicated her career to ensuring CET's financial stability and guaranteeing that the needs of students at CET were being met.

Thousands of people have received the training and support they needed to find meaningful employment that supports them and their families. Hermelinda's work and that of all the CET staff has changed lives and our community for the better. Hermelinda's leadership has made a profound difference.

Hermelinda will be retiring in June of this year, and it is with great pride and respect that I recognize her accomplishments.

I share with CET's Board of Directors in their heartfelt farewell to Hermelinda Sapien, and we will always remember her impact on the Center for Employment Training's success.

#### RECOGNIZING JACKSON DAVIS

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions made in our community by one of my constituents, Jackson Davis, who is currently in his first year of college. As part of his Eagle Scout Project, Jackson raised enough funds to buy a bus and all the supplies needed to convert the bus into a food pantry on wheels. He then donated the mobile food pantry to Messengers of Hope for use throughout the community. For his tremendous efforts, Jackson was recognized as the Eagle Scout Project of the Year for 2023. Jackson further inspired his family, extended family, friends, and fellow scouts to volunteer at Messengers of Hope to serve groceries and participate in other service projects. Part of what makes our country so great is the willingness of ordinary Americans to go above and beyond to selflessly give back to others. Volunteerism is one of the cornerstones of our society and part of the fabric that unites us.

It is clear that Mr. Jackson Davis has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for his service.

#### CONGRATULATING DIANE FITZPATRICK ON BEING NAMED BOYS & GIRLS EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

#### HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Diane Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer of the Boys & Girls Club of Manchester, for being named Executive of the Year by the Nation's over 1000 clubs. This award is determined by the Professional Association of Boys & Girls Clubs and by Diane's peers throughout the country. As the Executive of the Year, Diane has been recognized for her significant impact on the Manchester community and the youth development profession at a local, regional, and national level.

As CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Manchester, Diane works with staff, the board of trustees, and community members to serve children and families across the city. With over 30 years of experience in higher education, marketing, and business development, Diane has pursued a bold and innovative vision for the Boys & Girls Club since she joined the organization in 2014. In this role, Diane oversees strategic planning, fundraising, community relations, and partnership development.

She is widely regarded by staff as an indispensable leader and among the broader New Hampshire community as critical to the advancement of children's issues. I commend Diane for winning this prestigious award and will continue to support her work to help youth reach their full potential.

I look forward to seeing what Diane will accomplish for the Manchester community in the years to come, and I am confident she will continue to uplift kids and families in our district. On behalf of all the constituents of New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I applaud Diane for her commendable leadership, and wish her success in future endeavors.

#### HONORING APOSTLE DR. LEE F. RICE

#### HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 29, 2024*

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with the people of St. Louis, to pay tribute to the remarkable life and enduring legacy of Apostle Dr. Lee F. Rice, a dedicated servant of God whose impact extends far beyond the walls of Victory Christian Outreach Church. Dr. Rice's commitment to spreading the Gospel and serving his community leaves an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Dr. Rice was more than a pastor; he was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He is survived by his loving family, including his adult children: Rhoda Rice, Sadius Rice, Pastor Daphne Rice-Bruce (spouse-Alex