

Van Til has grown to include more than twenty locations, and the organization continues to evolve to meet the needs of the communities it serves.

Jeff Strack generously serves his community by giving his time and efforts to numerous charitable endeavors. He also serves on several local, national, and advisory boards. In addition, Strack & Van Til has a long history of supporting organizations that focus on hunger relief, first responders, military, educational foundations, local sports teams, and more. For his outstanding commitment to so many earnest causes, Jeff Strack is to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the LaSalle Council Boy Scouts of America and its 2024 Good Scout Award recipient, Jeff Strack. For his lifetime of leadership and tireless dedication to the community of Northwest Indiana and beyond, Jeff Strack is worthy of the highest praise.

RECOGNIZING TECHNION-ISRAEL
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the work of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology as it is celebrating its centennial. As Israel's first university, the Technion has educated generations of engineers, architects, and scientists who have helped lay the Nation's infrastructure and establish its crucial high-tech industries. At every juncture of the country's development, the Technion has been there, protecting the State of Israel.

The Technion is a global leader in science, engineering, research, and technology education. Its unique culture of entrepreneurship empowers students to be visionary change-makers and global innovators. The Technion is a global university with a presence in New York and China, having partnerships with institutions like the University of Michigan, Cornell University, and MIT. By having the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Technion-Cornell Institute at Cornell Tech on New York City's Roosevelt Island, they can bring academia and industry together, featuring the Runway Startup Postdoc Program.

In the past 100 years the Technion has become the leading university in Israel and Europe and one of the top 100 universities in the world. In 2020, the Technion was ranked No. 12 in the world for producing entrepreneurs, having generated 602 founders who have set up 509 companies and have raised \$12.4 billion. Technion graduates comprise the majority of Israel-educated scientists and engineers, consulting more than 50 percent of the country's founders and managers of high-tech industries. Seven out of ten Israel-educated engineers are Technion graduates and 85 percent of the Israel technological workforce are companies led by Technion graduates. Technion alumni have founded a total of 1,075 companies, valued at more than \$1 billion and have attracted \$2.5 billion in venture capital per year.

I also want to highlight the American Technion Society (ATS). Over the past 85

years, the ATS has raised a transformative amount of funding for Technion students, faculty, research, and infrastructure. This not only empowers Israel's economic growth and security, but better the lives of people around the world.

I give a big congratulations to the Technion and all of its accomplishments in the past 100 years. I am excited to see how it will continue to grow in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING HIS HOLINESS DR.
VASANTH VIJAYJI MAHARAJ
FOR HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize His Holiness Dr. Vasanth Vijayji Maharaj for his lifetime dedication to promoting peace, spirituality, and brotherhood.

At a young age, His Holiness committed himself to the teachings of non-violence, meditation, and religious unity. Accordingly, he has organized numerous events to educate people on moral integrity, sustainable environmental practices, and healthy lifestyle choices to improve societal well-being.

His Holiness has also worked to combat poverty and homelessness throughout India by organizing public gatherings and events. Collectively, his events have helped to distribute clothing items and food to more than 15,000 individuals in need.

Notably, His Holiness's movement for non-violence has received international recognition and engagement. In 2005, he organized the Historic Peace March in India, bringing together practitioners of multiple religions to promote unity. He also organized Vasanth Vizag, in which over 750,000 people gathered to advocate for peaceful conflict resolution. In 2008, he held the World Peace Festival where attendees participated in a candle lighting ceremony to signify harmony between countries around the world. His Holiness's commendable efforts to unify diverse peoples through shared values transcend national boundaries.

At all of these events, His Holiness showcased his unique approach to cultivating mutual respect and understanding between people by highlighting what they have in common. His vision is for teachers, parents, children, and policymakers to work together to combat social injustices. As a result of his teachings and guidance, his millions of followers have established over 100 peace centers and charitable trusts across the world.

His Holiness's efforts to promote interstate and interfaith cooperation have been recognized by organizations worldwide. In 2009, he was appointed as Diplomatic Counsellor of India by the International Parliament for Safety and Peace and given the prestigious title of Ambassador of Peace by the Universal Peace Federation. His Holiness was also nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize to recognize the impact he has had throughout the world.

His Holiness has empowered and uplifted countless individuals physically and spiritually, and it is for that impact, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to extend my gratitude and appreciation to His Holiness Dr. Vasanth Vijayji Maharaj.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ENSURING
FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE
CENSUS ACT OF 2024

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Ensuring Full Participation in the Census Act of 2024, which would prohibit the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) from including questions on the decennial census about citizenship, nationality or immigration status.

Prior to the 2020 census, the Department of Justice wrote to the Bureau requesting that it "reinstate on the 2020 [c]ensus questionnaire a question regarding citizenship." From 1970 to 2000, this question was sent to only approximately 16 percent of the population in the decennial census through the so-called "long-form." However, the long-form system was dropped from the census and replaced with the current American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is sent to approximately three million people annually on a rotational basis, and allows the Bureau to get the necessary information on citizenship. Asking questions about citizenship status to every person in the decennial census has not been done in almost 70 years because it would discourage people, largely minorities, who are already undercounted in the census, from participating in the census. The ACS was created to make the decennial census simpler for people to complete, which facilitates higher participation rates and preserves privacy.

Fortunately, after a protracted legal and political process, the citizenship question was not included on the 2020 census. However, this legislation is necessary to ensure it cannot be asked on a future decennial census. The representative sampling provided by the ACS is more than sufficient to determine citizenship statistics in the U.S. We must ensure that all individuals are counted in the decennial census, thereby providing accurate allocation of federal funds and representation in Congress, and not reduce participation by asking a question that is already asked elsewhere.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY OF ROBERT AND
KATIE PYLE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th wedding anniversary of Robert and Katie Pyle.

Robert was born in 1936 and Katie in 1940, both in Hobson City, Alabama. The Pyles attended school in Calhoun County. Robert graduated in 1956 and Katie was valedictorian of her class in 1958.

After graduation, Robert was drafted in the U.S. Army and enrolled at Tuskegee Institute School of Nursing. After a few years of separation, Robert was stationed in Korea. Katie wrote him letters often to update him on her life in Hobson City. When Robert came home from Korea, he walked Katie to the bowling

lanes because neither had a vehicle. The following day, Robert bought himself an XL500 red Ford.

The Pyles married on April 10, 1964, and Robert was deployed to Vietnam in 1965. His service to the United States included assignments at Ft. McClellan, North Carolina, NATO-Naples, Italy, Georgia, and Korea. He retired from the Army in 1976.

The Pyles have always put God at the center of their marriage and are active members at The New Hope Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Pastor Judge Stringer, III.

The Pyles have also been active in their community. Robert served as a council member and as mayor of Hobson City while Katie served on various boards.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the Pyles and thanking them for their service to their area and wishing them a happy 60th wedding anniversary.

RECOGNIZING KAREN EPTING

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions made in our community by one of my constituents, Karen Epting. Ms. Epting's leadership at the YMCA of the Suncoast—James P. Gill's Family Branch goes beyond mere titles; it's rooted in her genuine passion for making a difference in the Pasco community. As Chair of the YMCA Branch Advisory Council for many years, she provided strategic guidance and rolled up her sleeves to actively participate in the branch's many initiatives and events. Her role as Campaign Chair for the YMCA's fundraising efforts in Pasco County underscores her ability to rally support and resources for vital programs and services.

Her dedication ensures that the YMCA can continue its mission of serving the community effectively. Karen's continued involvement in the YMCA's partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay reflects her compassionate response to urgent community needs. Karen helps oversee the distribution of food to over 130 families every two weeks. In this capacity she not only addresses immediate hunger but also fosters a sense of belonging and support within the community.

Coordinating a team of 30 volunteers is no small feat, yet Karen does so gracefully and efficiently. She assists in recruiting and training volunteers and fosters a sense of camaraderie and purpose among them. Her hands-on approach during food pick-ups, where she personally welcomes each family and assists with intake procedures, demonstrates her commitment to serving others with dignity and respect. Karen's advocacy for youth literacy is also a testament to her belief in the power of education to transform lives. By leading volunteer efforts for youth reading programs, she promotes literacy and instills a love for learning in young minds, empowering them to reach their full potential. During the holidays, Karen's leadership shines brightly as she volunteers many hours to the YMCA's Seasons of Giving and Giving Tree programs, encouraging community members to spread joy and

generosity by purchasing gifts for children in need. Her ability to inspire others to give back underscores her exceptional leadership and ability to mobilize resources for the greater good. Despite her preference for working behind the scenes, Karen's impact reverberates throughout the YMCA and the community at large. Her selfless dedication and unwavering passion serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration, inspiring others to follow in her footsteps and make a positive difference in the world.

It is clear that Ms. Epting has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service.

HONORING JAYLEN WATSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and acknowledge the remarkable achievements of student Jaylen Watson.

Jaylen Watson, born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, is the youngest of two children to his parents, Chandra and Ronald Watson, Sr. His older brother is Ronald Watson, Jr. Currently, a student at Madison S. Palmer High School in Marks, Mississippi, Jaylen is excelling in his academic studies and maintaining an impressive 4.0 GPA. As a proud member of the class of 2024, Jaylen looks forward to graduating soon.

Throughout his high school years, Jaylen has actively participated in various community and educational activities. Some of his involvements include being a member of the Beta Club, FCCLA, The Global Teaching Project, and Jobs for Mississippi Graduates, among others. Within these organizations, Jaylen has taken up leadership positions, such as serving as a Chick-fil-A Leadership Ambassador and currently holding the role of Vice-President in his school's Beta Club. Additionally, he takes on responsibility of Class President for his senior class and Vice-President for Jobs for Mississippi Graduates.

While Jaylen has achieved many accomplishments and held numerous leadership roles, his faith in God remains his utmost priority. He is an active member of the New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he finds solace and support from his church family.

Apart from his academic and extracurricular pursuits, Jaylen has a strong passion for caring for the elderly in his community. To support this cause, he organized a community service project to raise funds for blankets and sock footies during the cold winter months. Jaylen successfully purchased these items for all the residents of Quitman County Health and Rehab, bringing joy and comfort to the vital citizens in need. Furthermore, he has also extended his support to preschoolers by sponsoring a class during Christmas time, motivating and uplifting their young minds with toys and treats. Jaylen finds great satisfaction in nurturing the future leaders of his small town.

With a deep commitment to giving back and caring for his community, Jaylen has decided to pursue nursing in his undergraduate studies

in college. His ultimate goal is to continue his education in graduate school, aiming for a doctorate degree to make a significant impact on his community. Jaylen is driven and excited to be the best version of himself, striving to make his family, friends, and community proud. He firmly believes that nothing is impossible with faith and lives by the inspiring words of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in acknowledging and celebrating the outstanding achievements of Jaylen Watson.

CONGRATULATING JAKE MERKLINGER AND RASHAWN TRUELL

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate two Georgia quarterbacks—Calvary Day School's Jake Merklinger, and New Hampstead High School's RaShawn Truell, for their tied win of the Finocchio Award.

The Michael Finocchio Memorial Outstanding Football Player Award, now in its 43rd year, crowns the standout high school player in Savannah and Chatham County. Remarkably, the recent award ceremony marked only the second occasion in its history where two players tied after voting concluded.

Merklinger, the senior quarterback who is committed to Tennessee, also took home the Ashley Dearing Award as a junior, which is awarded to the most versatile male high school athlete.

Truell says "this is a big honor for [him], especially as a junior, to win this award." He followed that by stating, "It shows that all the hard work that I have put in has paid off. But everything I work for is to help our team—our goal is to win a state championship."

Congratulations again to both Jake and RaShawn.

HONORING THE CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MR. ANGELO K. TSAKOPOULOS

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Angelo K. Tsakopoulos upon receiving the American Hellenic Institution Hellenic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Tsakopoulos is the founder, CEO, and co-chairman of AKT Development and has devoted his career to improving California for all.

Born in Arcadia, Greece, Mr. Tsakopoulos first came to the United States at the age of 15. He worked diligently to send money home to his family in Greece and attended the University of Illinois and Sacramento State University, where he cultivated his passion for learning. In 1964, he founded AKT Development, beginning what would become a lifetime of leadership in California's residential and commercial development.