

Off duty, Chief Collins has devoted his time to Ceres youth sports. He's coached youth soccer and served on the youth soccer board for three years. He's also volunteered as a coach for youth baseball.

Throughout his distinguished career in law enforcement, Chief Collins has exemplified the highest standards of duty and commitment to public service—earning the admiration of myself and his local community in the Central Valley. Upon his retirement, I want to extend my best wishes to Chief Collins on his new journey.

#### COMMEMORATION OF THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLACK JANUARY

##### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 25, 2024*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 34th anniversary of the “Black January” killings in Azerbaijan.

January 20, 2024, marks the 34th anniversary of the military invasion and vicious massacre of civilians in the city of Baku, Azerbaijan by the forces of the Soviet Army on January 20, 1990. On the night of January 20, 1990, approximately 26,000 Soviet troops stormed Azerbaijan's capital city in tanks and armored vehicles. The Soviet military bulldozed and open fired on innocent Azerbaijanis and peaceful protestors, including women and children. The attack resulted in 147 people killed, around 800 injured, 841 arrested, and 5 missing. I offer my thoughts and prayers to the families of those who gave their lives for the independence of Azerbaijan.

Despite these merciless acts, the Azerbaijani people continued to fight for their freedom and became independent in 1991. The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence and fully established diplomatic relations on February 28, 1992. As the co-chairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, I recognize the sacrifices of the Azerbaijani people in their steps toward a free-market economy and encourage a recommitment to the democratic values for which many Azerbaijanis sacrificed their lives.

#### RECOGNIZING A HIDDEN HERO OF THE HOLOCAUST: KADRI CAKRANI

##### HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 25, 2024*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we approach International Holocaust Remembrance Day to remember all the lives lost in this horrific event so many decades ago, and also to acknowledge the efforts of a particular and only more recently recognized hero of this period: Kadri Cakrani.

During World War II, Kadri Cakrani served as Commandant-General in the City of Berat, in Albania. Although his nation was occupied by Axis forces, Commandant Cakrani was able to utilize his position of relative authority to save lives.

Commandant Cakrani rallied soldiers under his command and the local citizenry to help

shelter hundreds of Jewish people who would otherwise have been killed by Nazi forces. Cakrani repeatedly lied to Nazi officials, claiming no knowledge of Jews within his area of authority. At the same time, he was coordinating the movement of families from one side of Berat to the other to ensure they were not discovered.

Commandant Cakrani even went so far as to shelter Jews within his own home during this period. In 1943, Cakrani successfully sheltered three U.S. Army nurses (Wilma Dale Lytle, Ava Ann Maness, and Helen Porter) trapped in the area after a plane crash returning them safely to the Allied powers.

The risks that Kadri and those working with him faced while they carried out these brave actions were enormous. Eventually, the rise of Communist leader Enver Hoxha forced Kadri Cakrani to flee the country in November of 1944. Cakrani eventually found his way to the United States, where President Harry Truman granted him political asylum and where he then settled down for the remainder of his life.

Kadri Cakrani passed away in 1972, but his efforts to bend the arc of history towards justice have been only recently rediscovered. Cakrani had safely fled to the United States, but many of the heroes that worked beside him remained behind the Iron Curtain in an Albania under communist rule. As a result, to protect those who would otherwise still be at risk, Kadri did not talk about these accomplishments.

Today, Albania is a free and democratic society. Scholars have pieced together the story of this remarkable man and those who worked beside him for good. On behalf of the residents of the 9th Congressional District of Illinois, I want to share my deepest gratitude to Kadri Cakrani and those who worked with him to save so many lives. These efforts and risks deserve recognition and remembrance, and I am so pleased to be able to share his story. Our world is better off because of the role that Kadri Cakrani played in it while he was here.

#### CAMPBELLSVILLE-TAYLOR COUNTY CHAMBER

##### HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 25, 2024*

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 75th anniversary of the Campbellsville-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce of Kentucky's 1st Congressional District.

Through the efforts of the Rotary Club, Lions Club, and local businesses, the Campbellsville-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce was first organized in May of 1949. Membership was small at first but has grown over the decades to include over 325 investors. I commend the bridge that has been created between local businesses, education, government, civic, and religious organizations.

The Chamber has been able to boost tourism efforts in Taylor County and has organized many popular events that has brought the community together, including the annual 4th of July Celebration which has become the largest Independence Day Celebration in Kentucky. I am honored to represent them in Congress.

I join with the community of Taylor County in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the

Campbellsville-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce and look forward to many more years of services.

#### CONGRATULATING WILLIAM T. HARRIS, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

##### HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 25, 2024*

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Space Center Houston President and Chief Executive Officer William T. Harris on receiving the prestigious Quasar Award for Economic Development Excellence from the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

William was named the President and CEO of Space Center Houston in 2019 and has since overseen and worked to ensure its continued success. As the Official Visitor Center of the Johnson Space Center, Space Center Houston is the top attraction for international visitors in the Houston area. Last year, it welcomed around 1.3 million guests, provided more than 1,700 jobs, and generated an annual economic impact of \$118.7 million.

Apart from his role in making sure Space Center Houston thrives, William has held many nonprofit leadership positions in museums and universities nationwide for more than 39 years. He currently serves as the immediate past chair on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Association of Science and Technology Centers, on the QueensCare Charitable Board, as Board Vice President of the Association of Science Museum Directors, on the Board of Directors for the Greater Houston Partnership, among others.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate William Harris on receiving this recognition and commend his dedication to STEM education and work to inspire generations of future pioneers in space.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 25, 2024*

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for two votes on January 11, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on Roll Call No. 7 and Roll Call No. 8.

#### REINTRODUCTION OF THE HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS REAUTHORIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT

##### HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 25, 2024*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to reintroduce the “HOME Investment Partnerships Reauthorization and Improvement Act,” with Representative JOYCE BEATTY (D-OH03).

I thank our original cosponsors for their support, as well as U.S. Senator CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO (D-NV) for sponsoring the companion bill. This updated legislation would significantly increase federal funding available for affordable housing across the country to tackle the housing crisis in states like California.

With historically high housing costs, a minimum wage worker in California must work an 88-hour week on average to afford a modest one-bedroom rental at a fair market rate. No American working full-time should live in poverty or be forced into homelessness. Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) must support collaborative solutions to incentivize affordable housing production and rental assistance to address the drastic shortage of housing options in California and across the country.

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) is the largest federal affordable housing block grant and is HUD's flagship program to support private developers and nonprofits building new affordable housing. Since established by Congress in 1990, the HOME program has helped state and local housing agencies support a wide variety of housing needs, from financing new construction and home repairs to funding down payment and rental assistance. HOME funding is the primary federal tool available for state and local governments to build affordable rental and owner-occupied housing for low-income to extremely low-income families with private developers. Moreover, HOME is a great federal investment, leveraging \$4.76 in non-federal public and private funds for every dollar in HOME funding.

Since 1992, the HOME program has supported more than 1.36 million units of affordable housing for renters, home buyers, and homeowners. In California, the HOME program has invested \$5.27 billion into affordable housing across the state; built or preserved 121,727 homes; given rental assistance to 43,810 families; supported 277,318 jobs; and generated \$19.2 billion in local economic development.

Despite these incredible investments, this essential program was last reauthorized in 1994 and needs critical updates to better address today's housing crisis. Our legislation would not only reauthorize the HOME program for the first time in three decades, but also make several much-needed improvements.

Specifically, our bicameral "HOME Investment Partnerships Reauthorization and Improvement Act" would authorize \$5 billion in HOME funding for fiscal year 2024 and boost the funding for the program by five percent annually through fiscal year 2028. This critical investment would reverse the chronic underfunding of the affordable housing investment program, which Congress appropriated only \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2023.

In addition, our bill would allow HUD to make loan guarantees under the HOME program, leveraging limited federal resources to allow state and local participating jurisdictions to tap more generous private financing to build new affordable housing. It would also improve HUD's ability to provide downpayment assistance to homebuyers and home repair assistance to homeowners under the HOME program. Moreover our bill would unlock HOME funds for nonprofits, community land trusts, and other shared equity homeownership partnerships to make more and better affordable

housing available to those Americans most in need.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members of Congress to cosponsor the "HOME Investment Partnerships Reauthorization and Improvement Act" to bring this critical HUD program into the 21st century and provide state and local partners with the financing needed to construct and rehabilitate affordable rental housing and provide homeownership opportunities for working families. Lastly, I want to thank my former Legislative Assistant, Mr. Tigran Agdaian, for his critically important role in developing this legislation during the 116th Congress while on my staff.

#### RECOGNIZING JACOB FLANNIGAN AND TRAVIS CANON

#### HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Ms. Pettersen. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jacob Flannigan and Travis Canon for earning an Honorable Mention Award in the 2023 Congressional App Challenge.

Jacob and Travis built an interactive app entitled Study Buddy which allows users to dress up a virtual animal avatar after completing tasks such as homework.

Jacob and Travis, students from Golden High School, spent countless hours and used numerous tools to learn about coding and app development while developing new skills and further advancing their STEM education. Their perseverance and dedication to this challenge exemplifies the character and determination the faculty instills in the students at Golden High.

Congratulations to Jacob Flannigan and Travis Canon for their hard work on this project. I am certain they will exhibit the same dedication and character in their future accomplishments, and I wish them the best of luck going forward.

#### RECOGNIZING THE NATURALIZATION OF MARITZA COROMOTO BIGGS

#### HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Maritza Coromoto Biggs, who will officially become a citizen of the United States of America on January 27, 2024, having recently completed her naturalization interview and test.

Ms. Coromoto Biggs, born in Punto Fijo, Venezuela in 1958, was the fourth of ten children. She grew up in a modest but hard-working family. Her father worked for a petroleum company and her mother was a young homemaker. At an early age, she made history as one of the first women in the Venezuelan Air Force and came to this country in November of 1982 as a diplomatic delegate to learn how to fly and operate F-16s from the distinguished professionals of the U.S. Air Force.

Ms. Coromoto Biggs had a long and distinguished career advancing peace, stability, economic development and the improvement of human conditions throughout the Western Hemisphere through her work at the Inter-American Development Bank. She and her husband, Tyler Sanford Biggs, an economist at the World Bank, built a family and community of close friends here in the United States. She has two daughters who live and work in Virginia and Washington, D.C. today and is a proud *abuelita* to her two grandsons.

As Ms. Coromoto Biggs takes her oath of loyalty to the United States, a place that feels more like home than her home country, we celebrate the American dream and the opportunity that this country continues to provide, and we congratulate Ms. Coromoto Biggs on her naturalization.

#### HONORING DON GUNDEN'S CAREER AND CONTRIBUTION TO INDIANA'S SECOND DISTRICT

#### HON. RUDY YAKYM III

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate my friend and fellow Hoosier Don Gunden as he prepares to retire from Forest River Inc. early next month.

Currently serving as General Manager of Forest River's Rockwood, Flagstaff and Palomino brands. Don "Gunny" Gunden has long been a leader in the recreational vehicle industry. Don started out in the RV business working at Starcraft straight out of college, and for the next half century he has devoted his professional life to the industry that is so important economically to northern Indiana and a source of so many happy memories for families all across America.

Don's 2022 induction into the RV/MH Hall of Fame only underscores his entrepreneurial spirit, commitment to excellence, and the tireless work he has done to maintain Elkhart's proud status as the RV Capital of the World.

As he prepares to retire, spend more time with his wife Theresa, and write the next chapter of his life, I am proud to congratulate Don Gunden on a distinguished career and a job well done. The Elkhart community and RV industry as a whole are unquestionably better off thanks to this good man.

I join Hoosiers throughout Indiana's Second District in expressing our gratitude and thanks to Don for his many contributions to our area and in wishing him a very happy, well-deserved retirement.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. MICHAEL WALTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Mr. WALTZ. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 15.