

commitment to our Nation, and also for giving back to the local community.

RECOGNIZING ECHTER'S NURSERY AND GARDEN CENTER

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Echter's Nursery and Garden Center of Arvada, Colorado for receiving the Arvada Chamber of Commerce's 2023 Business of the Year Award.

Every year, this award recognizes a business that has established a reputation for providing a superior level of customer service while using ingenuity and innovation to overcome challenges. Not only are the businesses recognized for their economic impact and successes, but they receive this honor because of the support they provide the community by partnering with town residents and nonprofit organizations.

Echter's Nursery and Garden Center has been one of Colorado's premiere garden retailers since 1959. The center offers over 2500 varieties of flowers each year in its 70,000 square foot display area. Echter's also gives back to the community in a number of ways, from providing over 300 Christmas trees to families in need every year to hosting events with local nonprofits, such as food drives and fundraisers to provide financial support to teenage parents and their children.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Echter's Nursery and Garden Center for this award and thank them for their commitment to our community.

COLIN FINNEY

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this past December, we gathered to celebrate Colin Finney, a bright young man who worked his way up to the rank of Eagle Scout. To achieve this rank, Colin undertook an Eagle Scout Project involving the restoration of generators and fans at Fort Mott State Park in Pennsville, South Jersey. Fort Mott holds a significant historical importance to our nation, serving as an Army Base during World War II. In 1942, three Diesel Generators were installed to provide essential electric services. Colin dedicated his time to the meticulous restoration work of these generators that involved cleaning, priming, and painting, as well as the restoration of the three fans and the gate door, ensuring their preservation for future generations. Looking ahead, Colin has ambitious plans. He plans to graduate from Salem Vo-Tech's Electrical program and continue his journey in the Electrical Field as a Lineman. Beyond scouting and his career aspirations, Colin enjoys hunting, spending time with friends, and has a commendable interest in firefighting. This remarkable young man has a bright future ahead of him and I can't wait to

see what he accomplishes. God Bless Colin and God Bless the United States of America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 30, 2023, I was absent for Roll Call No. 176. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on the Levin amendment to H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF ANDY FLICK

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and express my thanks to Andy Flick, the Executive Director of the New Democrat Coalition for the past two years.

Throughout his 15-year career in the House of Representatives, Andy has supported many New Dem Members and the Coalition as a whole in their work to break through gridlock and deliver for the American people.

As Chair of the New Democrat Coalition, Andy and I worked hand-in-hand to find new solutions to the persistent challenges facing our country, Congress, and Coalition. From standing up our policy task forces and working groups to ensuring each and every New Dem had the resources to succeed, he has made an incredible and long-lasting impact on our Members.

Under Andy's guidance, he has grown the Coalition's staff, tackled issues from inflation to infrastructure, and has ultimately helped turn the organization into one of the most powerful forces in Congress. His work to see old problems through a new lens has been at the center of our policy program and we will carry on his vision in the years to come. He truly embodies the spirit of the 'Can Do Caucus.'

As a result of his impressive work ethic, extensive knowledge of Capitol Hill dynamics, and policy prowess, he caught the eye of the Vice President's office, where he now serves as the Director of Legislative Affairs.

As we look toward the future, we know Andy's influence will leave a mark on the NDC and he will always be known for his exemplary service to the House, multiple Member offices, and the Coalition.

New Dems will be forever grateful to Andy for his astute insights, friendly demeanor, and political savvy, and there is no doubt he will bring this same positive attitude to his new role.

I wish Andy all the best in his future endeavors and look forward to continuing our shared work to move our country forward and ensure everyone has the chance to thrive.

RECOGNIZING FOOTHILLS REGIONAL HOUSING AND THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES OF JEFFERSON AND GILPIN COUNTIES

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Foothills Regional Housing and the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties for receiving the Arvada Chamber of Commerce's Nonprofit of the Year Award.

Every year, the Non-Profit of the Year Award typically honors one outstanding organization for their support of Arvada and its citizens through impactful programs, services, and overall involvement within the community.

This year, Foothills Regional Housing and CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties are being recognized together for their innovative development of the AVi at Olde Town affordable housing community which opened in February 2023. With 100 affordable housing units, AVi serves low-income families, homeless veterans, and emancipated foster youth. CASA manages an on-site Youth Alliance program which pairs foster youth with one-on-one educational, financial, and job mentors. Foothills Regional Housing also maintains an on-site case manager who provides direct support to residents and connects them to needed outside resources such as nutrition assistance or childcare. So far, the AVi development has housed over 100 families and made an immeasurable impact in the community.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate these two organizations for this award and thank them for their contributions to our community.

JACK FOWLER

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this December, I had the pleasure of attending the Eagle Scout Court of Honor of Jack Fowler, a young man who has accomplished a significant milestone in the world of scouting. Jack's hard work is a testament to his commitment to making a positive impact on the South Jersey community and his unwavering dedication to the values of scouting. For his eagle scout project, he took on the task of building fences and cleaning up the grounds of the Mount Zion AME Cemetery in Woodstown, South Jersey. The cemetery had become overgrown, and its boundaries were unkempt. With great care and effort, Jack built fences, created a defined entrance, and trimmed bushes and trees to beautify the area. His hard work not only restored the cemetery to its rightful dignity but also honored the memory of those laid to rest there. In this upcoming year, Jack plans to graduate from Salem County Vocational Technical Schools with an associate's degree in Biochemistry from Salem Community College. Outside of scouting and school,

he has a passion for music, playing the drums and guitar in his free time. Jack has already accomplished so much at such a young age, and it was my honor to celebrate him. God Bless Jack and God Bless the United States of America.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEAL MAUI ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 7061, the Healing and Economic Advancement for Local Businesses in Maui (HEAL Maui) Act, which would provide critical additional support to our small businesses which have been so severely affected by the devastating August 2023 Maui wildfires.

The Maui wildfires caused 100 known deaths, severely injured many others, and displaced thousands of our 'ohana (family). They burned over 2,500 acres of land and destroyed over 2,200 structures, including homes, businesses and historic landmarks. The full resources of our federal, state and local governments and communities are directed at recovery across many fronts.

My HEAL Maui Act focuses on our small businesses, the backbone of our economy. Our Maui small businesses, and indeed small businesses throughout Hawaii, suffered a "severe economic disruption" as a result of the fires and their aftermath. In fact, the State of Hawaii revised its statewide economic growth projections for 2023 and 2024 downward, from 1.8 percent to 1.1 percent for 2023 and from 2.0 percent to 1.5 percent for 2024.

On Maui itself, initial unemployment claims jumped from an average of 130 cases per week before the wildfires to 865 cases in the first week after the fire to 4,449 cases in the second week after the fire. The unemployment rate on Maui rose to 8.6 percent in September 2023.

This economic disruption is hitting Hawaii's small businesses especially hard because small businesses comprise the vast majority of our businesses and employ the vast majority of our workforce. Hawaii is home to over 130,000 small businesses, with the average small business employing just 12 people.

Affected Hawaii small businesses, still burdened with existing COVID-19 loans, find difficulty matching federal small business disaster assistance programs to actual needs and circumstances. In response, my HEAL Maui Act is a comprehensive legislative proposal designed to offer swift and direct assistance to our small businesses during these challenging times. This legislation builds on the lessons learned from previous crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need to tailor federal programs to address specific conditions in Hawaii and the specific circumstances and consequences of this disaster.

The bill offers three much-needed forms of immediate assistance. First, it would augment the existing Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program by providing immediate advances to ensure businesses can maintain operations and retain employees. Second, it proposes a new loan

program modeled after the Payroll Protection Program to directly address the immediate financial challenges many businesses face in the aftermath of the wildfires. Third, recognizing that some businesses have already taken out SBA disaster loans post-wildfire, my HEAL Maui Act offers a two-year loan deferment given the long duration needed for this recovery.

My bill should be viewed as additive and complementary to the other sources of assistance to our small businesses and their owners and employees. These proposals may not work for all small businesses in their own circumstances, but they do offer further options that may work better or exclusively for some. In that, they are another piece of a very big effort to achieve full recovery across the board from this terrible and tragic disaster. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

OPPOSING H.R. 5585, H.R. 6678, AND
H.R. 6976

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition of H.R. 5585, H.R. 6678, and H.R. 6976, a series of Republican messaging bills.

This week, instead of working in a bipartisan manner to fix our broken immigration system, the Republican Majority brought their partisan messaging bills to the House Floor. These three bills are unnecessary. As our laws are written today, conviction of these crimes already makes a person with a green card or visa deportable. For example, H.R. 5585 makes fleeing border patrol a deportable offense—this is already a deportable offense. H.R. 6678 makes an immigrant who commits Social Security fraud deportable—this is already a deportable offense. H.R. 6976 makes a person deportable if convicted of a serious DUI—this is already a deportable offense.

These bills are unnecessary, but what is radical about them is that they change due process under the United States Constitution. In two of the bills, the crimes described do no longer require a conviction to make a lawful resident deportable. In America, you are innocent until proven guilty. This has been the law of the land for hundreds of years. These bills are a slippery slope and move to take away the rights of those legally present in the United States. My concern is, will Republicans stop there, or will U.S. citizens be next?

With the bills House Republicans have brought to the Floor this week, along with their unjustified and unprecedented impeachment of Secretary Mayorkas in the Homeland Security Committee, they continue to demonstrate they are not willing to work toward real solutions to bring order to the border and fix our immigration system. You deserve real solutions to these issues. I am committed to working with anyone who is serious about bringing forward meaningful solutions to the problems at our border.

NICHOLAS GRUSEMEYER

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this past December, I had the honor of celebrating Nicholas Grusemeyer on his achievement of the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. Throughout his scouting journey, Nicholas has gained invaluable life skills, and as he puts it, "there was never a dull moment." For his Eagle Scout Project, he undertook the task of constructing a Memorial Wall inside the engine bay of the Quinton Fire Company in Quinton, South Jersey. This wall holds profound symbolism, featuring the original bell from one of the first fire engines, stars from an old hose used by Quinton, and a list of the names of past members of the fire company. It stands as a lasting tribute to the bravery and dedication of those who have served their community. Looking ahead, Nicholas has plans to graduate from high school and pursue a career in the Fire Service, a path that reflects his deep commitment to public safety and his desire to give back to the community that he has served as a scout. This outstanding young scout has set a high standard for us all to aspire to and it was an honor to celebrate him. God Bless Nicholas and God Bless the United States of America.

CCSO COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
OF THE YEAR

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Michele Hart on being named Communications Officer of the Year for the Citrus County Sheriff's Office (CCSO). The term "hero" gets used too often, in my opinion. It is said that "True heroism is remarkably sober and very undramatic. For, it is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but rather the urge to serve others at whatever cost." I could not agree more with this assessment. The heroism that is displayed daily by our first responders is both inspirational and aspirational for us all. So few among us answer the call to serve, yet it is the selfless sacrifice of those few who do that keeps our entire community safe.

By all accounts, Ms. Hart has dedicated her life to serving others, highlighted by her seven-year tenure with the CCSO which has included progressive responsibility as she was promoted from Communications Officer to Communications Officer In Charge, and then to Communications Supervisor before accepting her current role as Quality Assurance and Training Specialist. She has exhibited unwavering dedication and commitment to the improvement of the Communications Division, which is critical to the operational success of the entire law enforcement team. She has been recognized for consistently supporting new employees by researching and implementing enhanced training platforms to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. She also took a leadership role in converting the Department's communication program to a more