

HONORING DR. SANIA CHOUDHURY IRWIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent, Dr. Sania Choudhury Irwin, a trailblazing civic leader from Glen Ellyn devoted to engaging and strengthening her community and our democracy. A respected leader, she works to address the important issues in our country, such as healthcare, education, immigration, press freedom, the impact of money in politics, and so much more.

As the vice president of the League of Women Voters of the United States, Sania works to inform constituents, empower voters, and defend our democracy across the country and in Illinois' Third Congressional District. She also leads nonpartisan initiatives to increase voter participation, ensuring that our local communities make their voices heard.

As the cofounder of One Community, Dr. Irwin works to advance social justice initiatives in DuPage County, focusing on programs and actions that build community. Her efforts and advocacy have resulted in the formation of a community relations commission in which she serves as the chair, spearheading policies, initiatives, and resources that create a more equitable and more inclusive society for all.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Dr. Irwin for her inspiring leadership, commitment to justice, and unwavering service to our community and our Nation. I thank Dr. Irwin.

HONORING SISTER MARTA CICHON

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sister Marta Cichon, a woman who has profoundly transformed the lives of Polish immigrant families and uplifted single mothers in Illinois.

Born in Zabkowice, Poland, Sister Marta's duty to humanity has led her across the globe, serving in Australia before arriving in the United States in 2000. Here, she recognized a pressing need to support mothers and their children who are vulnerable to homelessness, hunger, and the lack of assistance.

Ultimately, Sister Marta established a single mothers home in 2008. The single mothers home offers essential services, from legal assistance to mental health support, empowering women to rebuild their lives.

For nearly 15 years, Sister Marta has provided refuge, hope, and a path to independence for over 140 mothers and 180 children, including those who have experienced domestic violence. To this day, these families maintain a close bond with Sister Marta, who considers them family.

I commend on this day Sister Marta for her compassion, resilience, unwavering community service, and commitment to ensure that all of us are seen.

May we be inspired by her. May we be encouraged by her and be reminded that it is our responsibility to serve others.

"Dziękuję" "thank you," Sister Marta.

IRS FAILS TO SERVE AMERICANS HELD HOSTAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, there has been a sharp increase in hostile and adversarial nations kidnapping American citizens and holding them for ransom. While these Americans are being held hostage, the last thing that they and their families need is more bureaucratic red tape here at home.

The fact that the IRS has been charging these hostages with late fees and penalizing them for failing to file their tax returns is yet another sign of the agency's failure to serve the American people.

It is time for the House to pass the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act, which will address this issue and support these Americans during one of the most challenging times in their lives.

An equally important component of this bill is that it would revoke the tax-exempt status of organizations that support terrorist groups like Hamas. No organization that supports terrorist groups should have tax shelters here in the United States.

It is time to stand with our allies and Americans. We need to pass this bill. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 9495, the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act.

CELEBRATING PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, 161 years ago today, President Abraham Lincoln stood before a group of soldiers, citizens, and elected officials to deliver the Gettysburg Address.

His words offered a chance to reflect on the terrible cost that this battle had brought to Gettysburg, to the soldiers who had fought there, and to our Nation that was strained by years of a devastating Civil War.

Here in Congress, I have the honor to represent Gettysburg and the Gettysburg National Military Park. Today, the park does incredible work to tell the story of Gettysburg and to preserve the memory of all those who fought during this historic battle.

Please join me in remembering the words of President Lincoln: "That this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth."

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National American Education Week.

National American Education Week is a time to acknowledge the vital role education plays in shaping not just individual lives but the future of our great Nation.

Education is the foundation upon which our Nation was built, communities thrive, and progress is made. Every child who walks through the doors of a classroom carries with them the potential to lead, innovate, and inspire.

It is our collective responsibility as educators, parents, and community members to ensure that students have every tool and every opportunity to succeed. Every student across our Nation has the right to an education.

As a senior member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I have advocated for commonsense legislation that uplifts our students and educators nationwide. Chief among these is the All Children Are Equal Act, or the ACE Act. This bipartisan legislation would reform the discriminatory title I formula to ensure equity and fairness for school districts with high concentrations of poverty. School funding should never be based on a child's ZIP Code, and I will continue to work to ensure that Federal funding is fairly and equitably distributed across our country.

Additionally, as co-chair of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, I am proud to continue my longstanding support and commitment to advancing CTE and investing additional resources in these highly successful programs that create rungs on a ladder of opportunity. CTE provides students with the skills they need to succeed in life, and I will continue to support efforts that help students and families of all ages make the right decisions for their careers.

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I am proud to lead on the Counseling for Career Choice Act, which provides additional resources to school counselors so that they can better equip students with the knowledge and the information necessary to make informed decisions about their educational journeys and future careers. Students are our future, and the commonsense legislation I have supported uplifts students to create a skilled workforce.

National American Education Week is a celebration of everyone who makes education possible. First, we honor our teachers, the unsung heroes who dedicate themselves to the mission of shaping minds. Their passion, patience, and perseverance are the lifeblood of our schools. A great teacher does more

than deliver lessons. They ignite curiosity, build confidence, and cultivate a love for learning that lasts a lifetime.

We also recognize the students who are the heart of the education system. Each one brings unique talents, challenges, and aspirations. It is their drive and determination that remind us of why this work is so important. They are the leaders of tomorrow, and investing in them today is the wisest decision that we can make.

Let us not forget the support staff, the counselors, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, and administrators. They create the environments in which learning can flourish. Their contributions, often behind the scenes, are essential in holding our schools together. Of course, we celebrate the families who support their children's education at home. Their encouragement and involvement play a crucial role in the student's academic success.

Mr. Speaker, National American Education Week is not just about education. It is about our Nation's values. It is about our belief in the promise of every child and the power of a community united behind them. Together, we can ensure that the doors of opportunity remain open to all, and in doing so, secure a brighter future for generations to come.

MILITARY FAMILY APPRECIATION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Military Family Appreciation Month, a time to honor the families who stand as the true backbone of our military community.

As someone from a proud military family, I know the sacrifices made by those who serve are only possible because of the unwavering support of their families. I enlisted at 18 and served for 24 years from the Vietnam era to the Gulf war, both on Active Duty and in the Reserves.

Throughout my years in the military, I had the privilege of serving alongside five of my eight siblings. My husband and my father also served our country. None of us would have been able to do this without the strength and support of our family.

This month, we celebrate military families, the silent heroes behind every servicemember's success. To all military families, we thank them for their sacrifices and their unwavering commitment to our Nation's freedom.

RECOGNIZING ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY
VETERANS LEGACY PROJECT

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Ambrose University Veterans Legacy Project, which is working to cement the legacies of over 25,000 of our veterans at Rock Island Arsenal in the Quad Cities.

Over Veterans Day weekend, I had the pleasure of meeting some of the individuals involved in this essential process. Their team of dedicated volunteers worked diligently to ensure the lives and careers of so many of our veterans are not forgotten.

They document the service and lives of veterans ranging from the Civil War until today. As a veteran, it inspires me to see young people who care so deeply about these personal sacrifices and American history. The detail and level of care which is put into this operation is breathtaking; speaking with friends and families of these servicemen and -women to ensure nothing is forgotten.

Without these men and women, many of whom gave the ultimate sacrifice, we would not be able to enjoy the freedoms we have today. It is my hope that this project can shine a spotlight on veterans' issues and the importance of safeguarding our history.

38TH ANNUAL STUDENT HUNGER DRIVE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible students from over 16 Quad Cities high schools who raised 787,186 meals for the River Bend Food Bank during the 38th annual Student Hunger Drive.

Through their hard work, creativity, and leadership, these students have had a profound impact on their community. By organizing events like penny wars and competing to raise the most meals, they not only provided vital resources but also united the community in their fight against hunger. Every meal they collected will go to those in need.

I am incredibly proud to represent these young leaders in Congress, and I have no doubt they will continue to make a difference in the Quad Cities and beyond. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them for their dedication and commitment to service.

HONORING JON WEST

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Jon West, an exceptional Iowan who passed away far too soon.

Born on May 24, 1971, in Mason City, Jon was a devoted husband to Tammy, father to TJ and Ashley, and grandfather to Rhea Lou and Lyra Jon. He dedicated 30 years to Winnebago Industries, rising from an entry-level position to lead manufacturing engineer where his innovations benefited both the company and his community.

Jon served two terms on the city council of Forest City, showing his deep commitment to giving back. A fourth-generation Iowan, he cherished his heritage and loved farming with friends, Jay and Kevin.

Above all, Jon's greatest joy was his family. His legacy lives on through them and his impact on his community endures.

Jon was a proud Iowan dedicated to his family, his work, and his State. He will be deeply missed.

GO HAWKS

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, this weekend on Saturday, November

23, the Iowa Hawkeyes play the Maryland Terrapins. Go Hawks.

BIRTHDAY WISHES TO AUSTIN HARRIS

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I wish a very happy birthday to my good friend, Austin Harris.

RECOGNIZING KEITH FORTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize someone whose service and leadership has been instrumental to the welfare of constituents in Arizona's Eighth Congressional District, my district director, Keith Forte.

Keith began his service to the Eighth District in May of 2021 in Surprise, Arizona's, office, and has been a steadfast leader throughout his tenure.

A 21-year U.S. Air Force veteran, Keith brings exceptional leadership experience to guide staff, manage congressional operations, and solve Federal constituent issues.

He led our staff in the successful completion of over 5,000 cases, which put well over \$13 million back in the pockets of my constituents.

Keith has made an incredible impact on the lives of constituents and is an invaluable member of my team. Keith is dedicated, hardworking, honest, and loyal. He is a great employee, and a great human being.

I thank Keith Forte for his leadership and service to me and the Eighth Congressional District. His dedication, leadership, and effectiveness were critical in the success of our constituent service programs and improved the lives of those living in our district.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Keith for his service. He will be missed.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL TREE

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a member of my district staff, Michael Tree, for his dedication and service to the constituents of Arizona's Eighth Congressional District.

Michael Tree, a U.S. Air Force veteran, serves as the military and veteran community liaison in my Surprise, Arizona, district office.

Michael expertly navigated problems for over 1,000 constituents who had issues with various Federal agencies, but primarily fought to help veterans with the benefits they earned after service to our country.

As a result, he directly saved constituents over \$2.3 million, which is an incredible achievement in service to my constituents.

Michael also displayed leadership abilities by managing my yearly service academy nomination process and military and veteran advisory board.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Michael Tree for his leadership and service to the Eighth Congressional District. His dedication and determination were critical to the success of our constituent service programs and improved the lives of those living in our district.