

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.

HONORING 2024 IERC VOLUNTEER FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR KERRY SHEPHERD

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kerry Shepherd, who is the chief of the Cloverdale Township Volunteer Fire Department, for winning the 2024 Indiana Emergency Response Conference Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year Award.

Kerry Shepherd was nominated for his selfless and unwavering commitment to the Cloverdale Township Volunteer Fire Department. He became a volunteer firefighter over 35 years ago to promote safety and preparedness for the Cloverdale community. Kerry has consistently fostered strong relationships with the fire department and the community around him through volunteering and public service.

Kerry won the Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year Award for his outstanding leadership capabilities, his perseverance during full-time, night-shift jobs, and his continuous dedication to volunteer. I am grateful for his exceptional service to our central Indiana communities, and I congratulate him on this outstanding accomplishment.

HONORING 2024 IERC FIRE OFFICER OF THE YEAR DARRICK WIATT

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Darrick Wiatt of the Greencastle Fire Department for winning the 2024 Indiana Emergency Response Conference Fire Officer of the Year Award.

Darrick Wiatt has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication and was recently promoted to captain after 6 years as a lieutenant.

Darrick showed extraordinary commitment during an incident in February 2024 where he supported EMS staff in maintaining the well-being of a pediatric cardiac arrest patient.

Darrick is also active in his community through volunteering with other fire departments and taking part in peer mentoring and engaging with others who struggle with mental health.

Darrick won the Fire Officer of the Year Award for setting an exemplary standard of work, his outstanding professionalism, and his commitment to the continuous improvement of the fire department.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to congratulate Darrick on winning this award.

□ 1030

IN MEMORY OF JOHNNY AND MATTHEW GAUDREAU

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

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau.

Last month, my home team, the Columbus Blue Jackets, played their season opener against the Florida Panthers. Each player wore a patch on

their jersey bearing number 13, the number previously worn by their teammate Johnny.

Johnny, or “Johnny Hockey” to his friends, played 10 full seasons for the NHL and was about to begin his third season with the Blue Jackets. His brother, Matthew, was an up-and-coming hockey coach following a professional career as a player in the AHL, ECHL, and Sweden.

In August, Johnny and his brother, Matthew, were killed when they were struck by a drunk driver while out on a bike ride. It was the day before their sister’s wedding.

Johnny and Matthew were beloved by their family and their community. Johnny is survived by his wife, Meredith, and their two children, Noa and Johnny Jr. Matthew is survived by his wife, Madeline. Both Meredith and Madeline are expecting children.

The Columbus community will never forget Johnny and Matthew. While their athletic talents were extraordinary, we can still learn from their example. We can emulate their strong work ethic, their love for their family, and their spirit.

To all who loved them, may their memory be a blessing.

RECOGNIZING THE LONDON, OHIO, POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the police department of London, Ohio. Last week, officers Dylan Fout and Denise Dye brought a missing autistic 5-year-old home to his family.

Last Tuesday, the officers were on patrol when they spotted a young boy walking alone. However, when they turned their cruiser around to check on him, he had disappeared. The officers continued their pursuit on foot, where they found the boy floating in a creek. He was conscious and breathing, but the 40-degree water could have quickly become a life-threatening issue.

Thanks to these officers and their quick action, the boy was rescued and the London Fire Department medics were able to provide the emergency care that he needed.

We commend Officer Fout and Officer Dye for their service to our community and share our gratitude that this boy could come home safe to his family.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL CAREGIVER MONTH

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Caregiver Month.

Forty-eight million Americans are family caregivers. The care they provide allows their loved ones to age independently at home. From preparing meals, helping with bathing, feeding, and dressing, to assisting with financial and legal matters, the work done by family caregivers is essential.

In my home State of Ohio, family caregivers provide nearly 1.4 billion hours of care every year. That adds up to \$21 billion in unpaid labor per year, saving taxpayers billions.

We know that families want to support their loved ones through illness,

disability, and aging in place, but many of them can’t do so without our help.

We are proud to introduce the Credit for Caring Act, which would create a Federal tax credit for family caregivers who use their own money to take care of their loved ones.

This National Caregiver Month, I encourage my colleagues to stand with me and support family caregivers.

CONGRATULATING NANCY HOWELL AGEE

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a remarkable individual from our great Commonwealth of Virginia, Nancy Howell Agee. Nancy was born at Roanoke Memorial Hospital, and it was here that she also began her journey into nursing at just 18 years old, a journey fueled by her passion for servant leadership.

Over the last 50 years, Nancy has dedicated herself to the health of our community. Starting as a nurse, she rose to the role of president and CEO of Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, making her the only female top executive in that position.

Under her leadership, the hospital has flourished, forging vital partnerships with Virginia Tech to establish a new medical school and Radford University’s premier nursing program. These initiatives are essential to keeping world-class talent in the Roanoke Valley.

As she retires, we must recognize her contributions, especially the future projects she leaves behind, including the new Crystal Spring Tower and the highly anticipated Taubman Cancer Center.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Nancy Howell Agee for her unwavering service and the lasting impact she has made on the Roanoke Valley. We wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

CONGRATULATING WAYNE F. PRYOR

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary leader in Virginia agriculture, Wayne Pryor. This December, Wayne will retire as president of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation after 18 remarkable years of service as State president.

His dedication goes back even further, having previously served as vice president and as a member of the board since 1988. Wayne’s contributions to farming haven’t gone unnoticed. He was named Virginia Farm Bureau’s Eastern District Young Farmer of the Year early in his career and received the organization’s Warren Beach Award in 2005, a testament to his commitment to nurturing future leaders in the agriculture industry.

His accolades also include the Honorary American FFA Degree, highlighting his dedication to agricultural education and FFA.