

where he remains a tireless advocate for the brave men and women who serve in the Border Patrol, fighting for them to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to protect our border.

As a Representative of a border district, I constantly relied on Art's expertise and advice, and I will always be extremely grateful for his constant willingness to be a resource.

As Art enters a well-deserved retirement, I honor his service, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to the safety and security of our Nation. I thank his wife, Zulma, and daughter, Zulma Alejandra, for their service as a family, as well.

On behalf of Arizona's Sixth Congressional District, Laura, my kids, myself, and our whole family, we thank Art for a career dedicated to keeping our community safe. I wish him and his family all the best as he embarks on this new journey. I thank my friend Art so much for his service. His contributions will not be forgotten. He is a true patriot.

CONGRATULATING PUSCH RIDGE CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pusch Ridge Christian Academy football team for winning the 3A State championship.

The fourth seed Pusch Ridge Christian Academy Lions overcame the odds and beat the second seed LA-West Foothills 26-7.

Despite falling behind 7-0 in the first quarter, the Lions roared back, scoring 26 unanswered points en route to their championship.

The title caps off a remarkable season for Coach Kent Middleton and his team.

After starting the season 1-1, the Lions won 12 straight games, including the State championship to finish the year 13-1.

I say to Coach Middleton, the coaching staff, the student athletes, administrators, and everyone who played a part in this special season, that you have made your school and your community extremely proud. Enjoy this victory. I look forward to rooting for the Lions next season. Go Lions.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JACKSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to give my last speech as a Member of the House of Representatives.

What an incredible honor this has been. It has never been lost on me that the privilege of serving here was granted by the people I represent, people who trusted me to listen to them, speak for them, and conduct myself with integrity.

Every time I have stepped onto this floor, I have felt the weight of our Na-

tion's history and the hope of millions of people that we will conduct ourselves and do work that serves them well.

One of the joys of serving in Congress has been the surprise of learning how much good work you can do if you are here to do work.

I thank my staff, an incredible group of young people who woke up every morning asking themselves: How much good can I do today? A big part of the reason serving here was such a joy and such an honor was because I was able to do the work with them. I won't go down the big list of everything that we got done, but we were able to do a lot: improve water systems for small towns; expand parental leave for members of the National Guard, parents who had earned it; and improve weather radar detection for the people of North Carolina's 14th District who have needed that for decades.

When people come up to me now that I am leaving and say: Boy, JEFF, I bet you are glad to be getting out of that place, I say, no, that hasn't been my experience here at all.

Part of the reason that has not been my experience is because of the two committees I had an opportunity to serve on: Armed Services and Science, Space, and Technology, relatively serious bipartisan committees, really about the work. There is not a lot of shouting going on in the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. The Armed Services Committee, for someone who enlisted as a private 22 years ago, to be a part of classified briefings with our Nation's top military leaders, what an amazing experience, what an incredible education. To anyone who is considering running to serve, I could not encourage you more strongly.

However, that said, a word of caution to everyone back home, as well as anyone who may be listening. I know that when you look at Congress, you see a lot of anger. What I need you to know is that most of the ones who are angry here are faking. They know that eliciting your outrage is a surefire way to gain your attention. Some of them want your attention more than they want to do a good job. I have seen this over and over again, that when the cameras turn off, so does the anger.

There are moments of genuine frustration felt by everyone. It is felt by me. That is normal in a legislative body. It is to be expected. The ones who are always trying to make you angry, they are faking. It is theater. A ton of you keep falling for it, and you owe it to yourselves not to be fooled by the outrage farmers in Congress.

My request to all of you, to everyone back home, is don't reward the theater, reward the work. If you do that, you will get more work and less theater. I thank my colleagues who do their job in that manner. I thank my staff who genuinely was a constant source of energy and inspiration. I thank my family who allowed me to be away from

home to do this work. Lastly, I thank the people of North Carolina's 14th District for trusting me to be your voice. It has been the greatest honor of my life.

CONGRATULATING JAMES WOOD
HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL TEAM

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

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the James Wood High School volleyball team for their remarkable achievement in winning the Class 4 State championship. The Colonels have truly made history, claiming three consecutive State titles with their latest victory on November 23 in a five-set match against Courtland High School at the Siegel Center at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The volleyball program has secured half of James Wood's total State titles in the school's 75-year history. During the championship match, the Colonels were led by two-time State player of the year Kennedy Spaid with 25 kills, 24 digs, and 4 aces. Alongside her, three-time first team all-State player Brenna Corbin had 21 kills, 23 digs, and 3 blocks, while first-year varsity setter Kylee Plumb had 50 assists along with 15 digs and 12 service points. Their victory capped off a phenomenal season, bringing the record to 23-3 and an impressive 3-year total of 76-6.

I want to recognize each player on this exceptional team: Kennedy Spaid, Reese Justice, Bella Middleton, Kylee Plumb, Adeline Pitcock, Kyla Wilhelm, Tenley Mattison, Katilyn Brannon, Giselle Norris, Abie Tenney, Brenna Corbin, and Claire Keefer. I also want to recognize the outstanding coaching staff: Head Coach Adrienne Patrick; Assistant Head Coach Brandy Corbin; and their managers: Ethan Germeyer, Ethan Montoya, Fielding Conway, and Kyleigh Bly.

Madam Speaker, I once again congratulate the 2024 James Wood High School volleyball team. Virginia's Sixth Congressional District is incredibly proud of their accomplishment, and I wish them continued success in the season ahead.

RECOGNIZING LOUDOUN STREET MALL'S 50TH
ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Loudoun Street Mall, also known as the Old Town Walking Mall in the city of Winchester.

Over 50 years ago, a group of visionary store owners recognized a shift in shopping habits and the growing demand for convenient shopping spaces. In response, downtown businesses came together to close off two blocks of one of Winchester's busiest streets giving rise to the Loudoun Street Mall.

This bold decision led to the formation of the Downtown Development Committee. Composed of Old Town businessowners, including Betsy Helm,

Irvin Shendow, Julius Armel, William Duncan, Lewis Ebert, Larry Goodyear, Ray Jennings, Frank Loy, Jimmy Wilkins, John Lewis, and David Juergens, who collaborated with city hall in the early 1970s to bring this vision to life.

While the mall initially thrived, it faced challenges in the 1980s and struggled for decades. However, in 2013, a revitalization began, bringing new amenities and life back to the area. Today, the mall is a true treasure of the Winchester region and a hub for the community and tourism.

From the first businessowners like Irvin Shendow of Bell's Fine Clothing, who served as chairman of the Downtown Development Committee, to then-State senator William Truban, who enabled legislation, to the current city and business leaders, the Loudoun Street Mall has become a top destination for residents and visitors alike.

I am proud to represent the citizens of the city of Winchester, the Loudoun Street Mall in the Sixth District of Virginia, and I am confident it will continue to thrive for many years to come.

CONGRATULATING SHERIFF STEVE FUNKHOUSER

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable leader and friend, Rockbridge County Sheriff Steve Funkhouser, as he prepares to retire on January 1, 2025.

A proud native of Rockbridge County, Sheriff Funkhouser graduated from Natural Bridge High School. Inspired by his family's commitment to service, he dedicated his life to protecting our community and our country.

For almost three decades, Sheriff Funkhouser honorably served with the Rockbridge County Sheriff's Office, starting his law enforcement career as a reserve deputy in 1996. He quickly rose through the ranks becoming a patrolman, investigator, lieutenant, and chief of patrol. In 2019, he was elected as the sheriff of Rockbridge County and Lexington city, winning reelection overwhelmingly in 2023.

Beyond his role as sheriff, he also served as a regional director for the Virginia Sheriff's Association and as an officer in the Virginia National Guard, retiring as a major after over 28 years of dedicated service. He has also contributed to the community by organizing Christmas shopping excursions for local residents of the Rockbridge County area.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing Sheriff Funkhouser's extraordinary commitment to our community and his nearly 30 years of service. I wish him and his family the very best in his retirement and in the next chapter of his life.

HONORING LIFE AND SERVICE OF GEORGE WILLIAM HAWTHORNE

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

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life

and service of my constituent, George William Hawthorne.

George is a 102-year-old World War II veteran living in Sidney, Illinois, whose life has been a testament of service to God, country, and family.

George grew up in Granville and Ottawa, Illinois, where his family were faithful attendees of the Congregational Church.

George's family has a proud tradition of service to the country. His family enlisted in World War I, and George was active in the Ottawa Cadet Corps. After high school, George worked several jobs to support the war effort following the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was eager to do more to defend his country, so he enlisted in the United States Army Air Forces on October 2, 1942.

Due to the attrition rates among bomber crews, there was an urgent demand for pilots. George courageously rose to the challenge. His class of cadets was raced through training at twice the typical speed to fulfill the need for pilots, and many cadets dropped out of the program.

George excelled and won his wings as second lieutenant on April 14, 1944. He was set to pilot a B-24 Liberator on a 13-hour flight to the Pacific theater. As he awaited departure, George became ill and was hospitalized with a serious infection.

While in the hospital, his crew left for the Pacific. Tragically, the plane went down in the Philippine Sea after an onboard explosion that claimed the lives of several crewmates.

George still wanted to do his part to serve his country. He trained another crew and prepared for the invasion into Japan. He flew to Hawaii and was stationed there when President Truman made the decision to use atomic bombs.

George finished out his time in the service flying a rescue squadron and was honorably discharged on October 29, 1946. He entered the Air Force Reserve and served there until July 31, 1960, attaining the rank of captain.

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Madam Speaker, after leaving the military, George continued his legacy of service by investing in his church community. He attended church regularly and served on multiple boards, committees, and volunteer projects. He also raised three wonderful children with his wife of 64 years, Louise.

Through all his years, George has remained passionate about his country and the freedom that makes it great. Like his father before him, George understands the value and the responsibility of serving in our Nation's military and defending our freedom. He instilled these values in his children and grandchildren, and many of his family members have continued George's legacy of military service.

He remains passionate about defending liberty, his family, and his right to practice his faith in Jesus Christ.

At 102, George is still excited about the future and has plans for things he still wants to accomplish. He is thankful to God for all he has been given, and he loves to talk about his experiences and the lessons he has learned on his journey through life.

On behalf of Illinois' 15th Congressional District, it is my honor to recognize Captain George Hawthorne for his courage and selfless service to our Nation.

PROTECTING PRODUCTION OF CRITICAL MINERALS AND RARE EARTH ELEMENTS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, last week, the Chinese Communist Party ordered a trade embargo on the export of critical minerals to the United States, minerals like gallium, which is used in semiconductor manufacturing and also used in the development of medical and dental devices.

This embargo by the CCP is yet another warning and a wake-up call: We need to produce these critical materials right here in the U.S. It is time to increase our domestic supply chains and safeguard our productions against foreign interference.

These critical materials are used in the creation of everything from cell phones to the guidance systems used by our military. We cannot and should not allow the Chinese Communist Party to manipulate what products we are able to build here in America.

This is the time to act. Government red tape should not continue to hold up this necessary manufacturing.

Under President Trump's leadership in the new year, we must take decisive action to approve new permits that allow the production of critical minerals and rare earth elements that are so necessary for our economy.

RECOGNIZING HENRY "JACK" ROEMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Jack Roemer of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on December 20.

There are so many positive things to say about Jack. He is one of the most kindhearted, salt-of-the-earth, intelligent, and witty people I have ever met. He had a long and successful career at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, where he served as general counsel, vice president, and a member of the board of directors. He is also a World War II Navy veteran and served as an officer on an LST, or a landing ship, tank.