

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Ryan Whitehouse, who tragically passed away earlier this fall in an accident in Michigan. He was just 43 years old.

Ryan was the Illinois Farm Bureau's Director of National Legislation, a friend, and great advocate of Illinois agriculture.

As family, friends, and colleagues mourn his passing, we also reflect on the lasting impact he made on farming families across the State of Illinois.

Ryan joined the Illinois Farm Bureau in 2013 and quickly set a high standard for service. In his role leading the Nation's legislative work, he made sure every county's interest was represented and respected.

When he visited Washington, he brought with him the voice of the farmers he cared so deeply about and he made sure their voices were heard.

Ryan treated everyone like a friend. He had a way of making you feel valued. Even through this tragedy, he continues to serve others through the Gift of Life Organ Donor Program.

I also appreciate Ryan's dedication to Illinois agriculture and for the way he strengthened every community he touched.

Mr. Speaker, the world would be a better place if we all carried the same spirit, kindness, and commitment. May his soul find peace and may God bless his family.

#### CELEBRATING DR. ALLISON BRASHEAR

(Mr. KENNEDY of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to celebrate a dear friend and pillar of our community upon her election to the National Academy of Medicine, Dr. Allison Brashear, dean of the University of Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

This prestigious honor is reserved for those who have truly advanced the field of medicine, which is exactly what Dr. Brashear has done for over three decades as a neurologist, researcher, professor, and a leader shaping the next generation of medical professionals.

Her journey started at the Indiana University School of Medicine where she completed medical school and her residency before joining the faculty in 1991.

She later became an endowed professor and chair of neurology at Wake Forest School of Medicine, served as dean at the UC Davis School of Medicine, and now in western New York, she is the dean of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Buffalo.

Over her distinguished career, she has received numerous awards and accolades, led more than 40 clinical trials, and earned continuous NIH funding since 2008.

Her early breakthrough, using botulinum toxin to treat spasticity in stroke survivors, opened the door to multiple FDA-approved therapies that patients across the country now rely on.

She also identified rapid-onset dystonia-parkinsonism, advancing our understanding of rare neurological diseases, and she remains one of the Nation's leading experts on neurological disorders.

However, what truly sets Dr. Brashear apart is her commitment to connecting healthcare to the communities that need it most.

As dean of the Jacobs School, she serves on boards of the Western New York Women's Foundation, the Great Lakes Health System, and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, strengthening the links between cutting-edge research, accessible care, and the everyday health needs of families in western New York and beyond.

Dr. Brashear's life's work reminds us of a simple truth: Our healthcare system is only as strong as the people who choose to serve in it. Dr. Brashear shows us what is possible when we invest in talent and when we open doors for smart, compassionate people to pursue careers in medicine. Her success is a testament to what happens when opportunity meets dedication.

Mr. Speaker, may we honor Dr. Brashear's extraordinary career by ensuring the next generation of healthcare practitioners have the chance to follow in her footsteps. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Allison Brashear. Western New York and our entire Nation are stronger because of her, her leadership, and her commitment to our Nation and to future generations in healthcare.

#### TRIBUTE TO FUZZY ZOELLER

(Mrs. HOUCHIN of Indiana was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Fuzzy Zoeller, a legendary PGA golfer and a beloved figure in southern Indiana.

Born in New Albany, Fuzzy never forgot where he came from. He remained deeply connected to our community throughout his life, and southern Indiana was always home.

Fuzzy made history by winning the Masters Tournament in 1979, one of only a handful of golfers to capture this title in their first appearance. He went on to win the U.S. Open in 1984, cementing his place upon the greats, but Fuzzy's impact reached far beyond golf. He has been a devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

Through his generosity, his local businesses, and his support for community events and charities, he strengthened southern Indiana in countless ways. His willingness to invest in people, especially young athletes, reflected the kind of leader he was.

Fuzzy Zoeller showed that excellence and humility can go hand in hand. His

legacy will continue through his children and grandchildren who loved him dearly.

CONGRATULATING TRINITY LUTHERAN COUGARS

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Trinity Lutheran Cougars on defending their IHSA Class 1A state volleyball championship.

After graduating five of six starters last season, these young women came back with heart and grit to win again. They defeated Faith Christian Eagles in four sets to secure their second straight title.

This win isn't just about a trophy. It is about resilience. It is about proving that dedication and belief can keep a championship legacy alive. Their work ethic, team spirit, and poise under pressure deserve recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I thank every Cougar on that court for showing us what it means to fight and to win together.

Congratulations to Trinity Lutheran.

INDIANA HOOSIERS ARE BIG TEN CHAMPIONS

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise with tremendous pride to celebrate a historic achievement for my alma mater, Indiana University. For the first time in program history, the Indiana Hoosiers are Big Ten Champions.

This victory reflects more than a great season. It represents the discipline and heart of a team that refused to be counted out. Week after week, these young men demonstrated what it means to compete with character, to fight through adversity, and to rise to the moment when it mattered the most.

Hoosier Nation is built on tradition and excellence. This championship is a testament to the leadership of the coaching staff, the commitment of every student athlete, and the passion of fans across Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud graduate of Indiana University, I could not be more honored to recognize this extraordinary milestone. I congratulate the players, coaches, and the entire IU community. They have made history and have made Indiana proud.

#### HONORING MAYOR VICTORIA WOODARDS

(Ms. STRICKLAND of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mayor Victoria Woodards, who is retiring as Tacoma's 39th mayor.

A graduate of Lincoln High School, she proudly served her country in the U.S. Army, thinking she would see the world and ended up right back home at Fort Lewis. She also pursued a long career in public service as a parks commissioner, as a city councilmember, and as mayor of Tacoma.

I congratulate Victoria on an exemplary and distinguished career of more than 15 years serving the people of Tacoma. Under her leadership, the city

launched the equity and empowerment initiative, which led to the creation of our Office of Equity and Human Rights. The city implemented key police reforms, including updates to the use of force standards, and established the city of Tacoma's first Youth Commission, giving high school students a chance to learn how government works. She passed Home in Tacoma, which expanded key and necessary housing opportunities across the entire city.

She also raised our profile nationally by serving as president of the National League of Cities, promoting the platform of people, partnership, and possibilities. She launched the Growing Resilience in Tacoma, otherwise known as GRIT, one of the first guaranteed-income pilots in the entire Nation to address systemic poverty. She supported the creation of Maritime 253, which is a skills training center in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools and the Port of Tacoma.

Throughout her career, Mayor Woodards has broken barriers, championing equity and justice for all, and has been instrumental in ensuring that every voice in our community is heard.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mayor Woodards for her selfless service to "The City of Destiny," Tacoma, Washington, and the Nation.

#### ENSURING FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY IN FEDERAL TRIBAL RECOGNITION

(Mr. EDWARDS of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, this year's NDAA strengthens America's military readiness. It invests in cutting-edge defense capabilities. It ensures our servicemembers have the training, tools, and support they need to confront the growing threats that we face at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong opposition to the NDAA provision that seeks to circumvent the established merit-based process for Federal Tribal recognition and instead grant unchecked Federal recognition to the Lumbee community.

I am proud to represent North Carolina's 11th District, home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, a sovereign Tribal Nation whose culture, language, and history are a treasure not only to the State of North Carolina but to the United States as a whole.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee are the descendants of those who fought to remain in their ancestral homelands in the face of forced Federal removal. By contrast, it must be noted that the Lumbee community has no treaties with the Federal Government, no reservation land, and no common language.

As Members of Congress, one of our most solemn responsibilities is to ensure that laws are applied fairly, objectively, and consistently.

For over 40 years, the Department of the Interior through the Office of Federal Acknowledgement has carried out a rigorous merit-based process for determining Federal Tribal recognition. This process was created by Congress to prevent political favoritism or arbitrary decisionmaking as it requires careful documentation and verification, including proof of Native American ancestry.

Bypassing this process, as is suggested through this NDAA, by including the Lumbee Fairness Act as an amendment, sets a dangerous precedent. It would invite other groups with unsubstantiated claims to sidestep this process and seek recognition through political channels rather than merit. That undermines the integrity of the recognition process, and it threatens the credibility of Indian Country as a whole.

The OFA has found that some petitioning groups consisted entirely of individuals unable to demonstrate Native American ancestry, not a single person. Recognizing these groups would be a disservice to legitimate Tribes. In the case of the Lumbee, this amendment would in one stroke create the largest Tribe in the country, granting immediate access to already overstretched Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service resources.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am proud of the work that we have done to provide robust funding for the Indian Health Service and other critical priorities for federally recognized Tribes in the fiscal year 2026 Interior appropriations bill.

If the Tribal population eligible for these services suddenly grows by tens of thousands of people, many of whom have no native ancestry, resources will be spread too thin, and the Tribes with established rights will suffer.

That is the crux of the issue. If the Lumbee had a case that could withstand the scrutiny of the OFA process, they would go through the OFA process as set out by law. But as they know, it won't hold up under a deliberative process. They sought special treatment through the legislative shortcuts, despite opposition from more than 140 federally recognized Tribes from across the country that have stated the integrity of this process must be preserved, and I agree. Recognition should be earned on the merits, not granted through politics.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this provision and uphold the process put in place by Congress decades ago to ensure fairness and integrity in Federal Tribal recognition.

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#### RECOGNIZING OCFA CHIEF BRIAN FENNESSY

(Mr. CORREA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Orange County Fire

Authority Chief Brian Fennessy, who, after 8 years as chief, will be retiring.

While at Orange County Fire Authority, Chief Fennessy led the department through the COVID-19 pandemic and through the Bond, Silverado, and Blue Ridge fires. He was named by the Orange County Register as one of the most influential individuals in Orange County in 2020.

After his retirement, Chief Fennessy will now assume the director role in the newly created U.S. Wildland Fire Service.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chief Fennessy for his commitment to keeping Orange County safe. He will be missed. I congratulate him on his retirement.

#### RECOGNIZING ANAHEIM POLICE CHIEF RICK ARMENDARIZ

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Anaheim Police Chief Rick Armendariz, who, after 30 years at Anaheim Police, will be retiring from law enforcement.

In 2019, Chief Armendariz joined the Anaheim Police Department. During his time as chief, Chief Armendariz championed community engagement, worked with local schools, and pushed to improve conditions and resources for Anaheim's homeless population.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chief Armendariz for keeping our community safe, and I congratulate him on his well-earned retirement.

#### HONORING JAMES T. POSTON

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor James "Jamie" T. Poston, a proud American and Vietnam combat veteran who has dedicated his life to serving our great country.

Jamie entered the United States Army in 1966, deploying to Vietnam as a Mustang crew chief.

Today, at 80 years young, Jamie remains a pillar of support for our local veterans. Every Thursday, he volunteers at the military diversion court in Santa Ana. He attends bimonthly veteran treatment court meetings, and he drives fellow veterans to recovery groups. He makes sure that no one walks their journey alone.

Jamie Poston represents the very best of our veterans and Vietnam war veterans—courage in war, compassion in peace, and service that never ends.

#### RECOGNIZING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the 75th anniversary of the Municipal Water District of Orange County. For 75 years, MWDOC has been our county's water supplier.

In Orange County, they have been critical to delivering emergency preparedness, water use efficiency, and public education. From working with local Scout groups to supporting investments in our future water supply reliability, MWDOC has truly impacted every life in Orange County.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate MWDOC on its 75th anniversary.

#### RECOGNIZING LE DINH LUONG

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the birthday of Vietnamese human rights defender Le Dinh