

in high quality and unparalleled commitment. Their business is family owned and family operated with over 500 years of experience in the industry and over 150 employees.

I was fortunate to meet members of the McCourt family recently in Washington through Associated Equipment Distributors. They are a wonderful group of dedicated people.

The wonderful story of their parents, John and Eileen, as well as the story and success of their entire family, is something to marvel at, Mr. Speaker.

We should all take the time to recognize the impeccable, business-driven and value-driven people in our communities and across the Nation like the McCourt family for all they do in supporting our great American economy.

A MODERN BROADSIDE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight a very insightful and pertinent report from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, ACTA, titled: "A Broadside for the Nation, Preparing College Students for Informed Citizenship."

ACTA is a wonderful, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability through the trustees at America's colleges and universities as well as informing and engaging the general public.

The broadside is reminiscent of the many broadsides published during the revolutionary period that were so important in informing the people along with getting their support for the revolution.

Being an informed citizen isn't passe. It is one of our most sacred responsibilities as Americans and one we cannot afford to abandon or ignore.

As the report's authors lay out: "True patriotism includes a commitment to and appreciation of American values and principles. Since the founding of our Nation, our greatest leaders have recognized that our freedom and our prosperity depend on informed and engaged citizens."

We just celebrated 250 years of American greatness, Mr. Speaker, and we ought to do all that we can to learn of and espouse the values and principles that make America the greatest country in the world.

Michael Poliakov, the president of ACTA, captured this sentiment perfectly in this report: "The birth of America 250 years ago amazed the world, and our founding documents have inspired the search for freedom and human rights throughout the world. The colleges and universities built and maintained by the vision and generosity of generations of Americans owe it to the Nation to ensure that every student they graduate understands the precious heritage we share."

Let us not forget the wisdom of Thomas Jefferson who once opined on this very issue: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

I commend ACTA and the many authors who contributed to this report for calling attention to this issue. It is one that we all would do well to wholeheartedly support.

RECOGNIZING UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO PRESIDENT SATISH TRIPATHI

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

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of an extraordinary leader, educator, and public servant whose vision has transformed the University at Buffalo and our entire community.

After 15 years as president of UB, Dr. Satish Tripathi is concluding a remarkable chapter of service defined by innovation, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to academic excellence.

During his tenure, the University at Buffalo has reached new heights. Enrollment has grown to nearly 30,000 students. Flourishing scientific research has positioned UB among the Nation's premier public research institutions, and UB has strengthened its role as an engine of economic opportunity, helping to launch and nurture hundreds of local startup companies.

UB is attracting world-class faculty and empowering the next generation of innovators, scientists, engineers, and healthcare professionals.

Under Dr. Tripathi's leadership, the medical school found a new home on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, strengthening the connection between higher education, healthcare, and the revitalization of our great city.

UB has become a cornerstone of New York's Empire AI initiative, ensuring that western New York sits at the forefront of AI innovation.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, if you ask Dr. Tripathi about these extraordinary accomplishments, he is quick to credit the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners who have helped make them possible.

That humility has long been one of his defining qualities. His leadership has never been about personal recognition. It has always been about building an institution that empowers others to succeed.

He will continue serving UB as a researcher and educator, focused on advancing the ethical development of artificial intelligence and mentoring the next generation of scholars. The University at Buffalo, western New York, and our Nation are stronger because of Dr. Tripathi's leadership. His legacy will be measured in the lives he has changed and the brighter future he has helped create with generations of students.

On behalf of a grateful community, State, and Nation, I thank Dr. Satish Tripathi for his extraordinary service, congratulate him on an exceptional presidency, and wish him continued success as he begins this next chapter.

Godspeed to Dr. Tripathi.

CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BELLE CENTER.

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a remarkable milestone for western New York: The 50th anniversary of The Belle Center in Buffalo, New York.

For one-half of a century, The Belle Center has been a place where every child has been welcomed, every family is valued, and every family is given the opportunity to thrive.

Under the exceptional leadership of Executive Director Lucy Candelario and her dedicated team, The Belle Center has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of Buffalo's west side. Through early childhood education, after-school programming, workforce development, and services for families and seniors, The Belle Center has remained steadfast in its mission to meet Buffalonians where they are and provide the support they need to build brighter futures.

As our neighborhoods have grown more diverse and new challenges have emerged, the center has answered the call by expanding educational opportunities, welcoming new Americans through English language learning, supporting working families, and celebrating the rich cultures that make our community stronger.

As we celebrate this golden anniversary, we also celebrate the countless staff members, volunteers, and community partners whose dedication has transformed lives and strengthened the City of Good Neighbors.

Today, I join western New York in congratulating The Belle Center on 50 extraordinary years of service. May it continue to uplift our neighbors, strengthen our community, and carry forward Father Belle's enduring legacy of compassion and service for generations to come.

I congratulate The Belle Center.

HONORING FORMER MAYOR DOLLY PEREZ

(Ms. DE LA CRUZ of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor former mayor, Dolly Perez, on her retirement after nearly four decades of service to the city of Premont.

Dolly's deep commitment to her hometown is a family legacy, inspired by her father who served on the city council over 70 years ago.

After giving 36 incredible years of service as Premont's city secretary, Dolly answered the call to leadership, successfully running for mayor to finish community projects, balancing the city budget, and building a brighter future for the town she loves.

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Her decades of sacrifice, compassion, and leadership have left an incredible mark on the community.

I thank Mayor Dolly Perez for her extraordinary lifetime of public service and congratulate her on her well-deserved retirement.

HONORING RETIRED AIR FORCE MAJOR HOMER GALLEGOS

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of an American hero and a pillar of the McAllen community, retired United States Air Force Major Homer Gallegos.

Born and raised in McAllen, Major Gallegos answered the call to duty in 1968, enlisting in the Air Force and serving a tour of duty in south Vietnam. He dedicated 30 years to the Air Force Reserves, ultimately retiring at the rank of major.

His service to our Nation did not end when he took off the uniform. For over two decades, Major Gallegos worked as a licensed professional counselor at the McAllen Vet Center, helping his fellow veterans heal from the invisible wounds of war.

He served as a commander of the VFW Post 8788 for over 20 years, where he stood in the honor guard to provide final military honors to Rio Grande Valley veterans.

His lifetime of selflessness earned him the national Hands and Heart Award from the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs. His legacy will forever be defined by his faith, devotion to his family, and his servant's heart.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FALFURRIAS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the incredible men and women of the Falfurrias Volunteer Fire Department for 100 years of service to south Texas.

The department's history traces back to 1926, when local citizens formed a bucket brigade to fight a fire breaking out in Falfurrias.

Recognizing the need for an organized operation, the brave community members officially established the department. From its earliest days, operating with an old Jeep carrying a single barrel of water, the department has grown into a modern emergency response powerhouse with a fleet of over 15 trucks, covering more than 500 square miles across Brooks County.

For 100 years, their mission has remained unchanged: to serve with honor and with bravery.

We are grateful to the Falfurrias Volunteer Fire Department for keeping Brooks County safe.

RECOGNIZING SPECIAL INTERNS

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to quickly recognize that we have special interns from the district that are celebrating their birthday today. I would like to wish a happy birthday to David Rodriguez and Joseph Uribe. We wish them many blessings, today and always. God bless them.

36th ANNIVERSARY OF ADA

(Mr. HOYER of Maryland was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, one of the proudest moments of my time in public service was sponsoring the Americans with Disabilities Act and seeing it through to enactment.

I was honored to work closely with House and Senate colleagues, leaders like Bob Dole, Tom Harkin, Tony Coelho, Steve Bartlett, Orrin Hatch, and Ted Kennedy, just to name a few. We passed it on a bipartisan basis, and it was signed into law by President George Bush in 1990.

This month, we celebrate the 36th anniversary of the ADA. In those 36 years, that law has made a transformative difference for millions of Americans. It did so not only for physical access to public and private spaces of public accommodations but also in ensuring reasonable accommodations in workplaces and nondiscrimination in every facet of American life.

We have seen it strengthened through legislation like the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 and through the courts with decisions like *Olmstead v. L.C.* in 1999.

That decision concerned the ADA's nondiscrimination rule and applied it to the forced segregation of disabled people away from their communities, a historic tragedy in centuries past.

The *Olmstead* ruling affirmed that States are required to provide disability services in the most integrated setting possible: in schools, workplaces, and even individuals' homes.

Last month, the Department of Justice issued new guidance that the ADA does not guarantee—according to them—a right to live and receive services in integrated settings. Instead, it reinterprets the *Olmstead*'s decision as only prohibiting States from unnecessarily institutionalizing those with disabilities without adequate justification and that it did not establish a general integration mandate.

Frankly, that is absurd. *Olmstead* merely affirmed what Congress had clearly intended in the ADA. Unlike when we speculate on what our Founders' intent was in paraphrasing certain parts of our Constitution, when it comes to laws enacted 36 years ago, we can go right to the source.

Let me be absolutely and unambiguously clear, as the House sponsor of the ADA: An integration mandate, as outlined correctly in the *Olmstead* ruling, was our intent.

Senators Dole, Kennedy, and Hatch may no longer be here to state it, but I am sure former Senator Harkin and former Representative Coelho, Bartlett, and others, who were involved in drafting and enacting the law, will affirm the same.

Among the findings expressly listed in the text of the ADA was that, "Society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, such forms

of discrimination against individuals with disabilities continue to be a serious and pervasive social problem," according to the *Olmstead* case.

The Department of Justice is wrong and ought to retract its new guidance to States and communities.

At the same time, we have also seen the Trump administration use disability rights as an excuse to undermine ballot access and trample on the Help America Vote Act, which I also had the honor of sponsoring.

The same principle just outlined about *Olmstead* applies here as well. It was never Congress' intent in writing the ADA that accommodating people with disabilities should be used as an excuse to limit Americans' right to vote, just as it should not be issuing a rule penalizing Americans with disabilities for living at home with their families and caregivers and slashing Medicaid funding, upon which so many in the disability community rely.

I certainly hope statements like this one—from someone who was intimately involved in the writing of the ADA and stated from the floor—will serve as a reminder of the legislative intent of the ADA and of the Congress: It is truly all about nondiscrimination, public accommodation, equal access, and, yes, integration as much as possible within communities.

We cannot turn the clock back to the time before the ADA, when those with disabilities were ostracized, isolated, and locked away.

I am proud of the part I played in changing that. All of us should be proud that this institution came through and delivered in both promise and practice. Let us continue to do so today.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT BENTLEY

(Mr. TAYLOR of Ohio was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a homegrown veteran and great American hero, Mr. Robert Bentley.

Known as "Bob" by his friends and family, Mr. Bentley was a student at Jefferson High School in Adams County, Ohio, in 1968, when he made the courageous decision to leave school and answer the call to serve his country as a teenager.

After attending basic and advanced military training, Bob served in Vietnam as a Specialist 4 in the United States Army from April 1969 to December 1970. Bob joined countless young Americans who set aside their own personal ambitions to defend the Nation they loved. His honorable service left a lasting legacy in his family, community, and our great Buckeye State.

I am proud to not only commend Bob for his selfless service but to congratulate him for being awarded an honorary high school diploma by the Adams County Ohio Valley School Board in recognition of his sacrifice and dedication. My staff was honored to attend