

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

his ceremony and present him with a congressional commendation as well.

We congratulate Bob. This year, his high school education is complete.

Veterans like Bob continue to inspire those in southern Ohio and the whole Nation through outstanding courage, deep patriotism, and remarkable selflessness. It is heroes like him that preserve our Nation's values and the freedoms that we hold so dear.

We thank Bob for his service.

RECOGNIZING COACH CHRIS VEIDT'S 500TH CAREER WIN

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the White Oak High School's head baseball coach Chris Veidt for his 500th career win this year.

As a long-standing head coach of 35 years, Coach Veidt has made his mark not only on the diamond but throughout Highland County as well.

Buckeye baseball has always been in Coach Veidt's blood. After graduating from Logan High School in 1982, he played competitively at the University of Rio Grande and Wilmington College, where he ultimately earned a degree in physical education. He went on to obtain a master's in health and sports science from the University of Dayton. Go Fliers.

Afterward, he applied his extensive knowledge as an assistant coach for the Wilmington baseball team, helping the Quakers clinch the State championship in 1989.

Over the course of his coaching career, Coach Veidt has earned five SHAC Coach of the Year Awards, nine Southeast District Coach of the Year honors, multiple State and regional recognitions, and was inducted into the Ohio High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2024. He earned a place in the Southeast District Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2014, and has served as an OHSBCA State Poll voter since 1993. To top it all off, Coach Veidt was awarded the OHSAA Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity Award at the end of the 2026 season.

It is devoted figures like Coach Veidt whose impact stretches far beyond the baseball field and into the lives of their players, their families, and their communities.

The mentorship, leadership, and commitment he has demonstrated toward hundreds of student-athletes has developed the next generation of leaders. He has cheered his players on for nearly four decades, and now Ohio is rooting for him.

I congratulate Coach Veidt on a storied career and 500 wins.

RECOGNIZING DR. JOHN SEIDENSTICKER

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding southern Ohioan who has served thousands of Chillicothe families for nearly six decades, Dr. John Seidensticker.

Following in his grandfather's footsteps, John attended medical school and started working in internal medicine at the Chillicothe Hospital in 1967. After gaining experience, he moved

over to endocrinology, which he ultimately specialized in.

Over the decades of practicing medicine, John served multiple generations of Buckeye families and witnessed firsthand how advancing technologies changed the medical field.

When the Chillicothe Hospital became Adena Health in the late 1990s, John was instrumental in creating their hospice program after seeing a need for additional care in our local aging population. John took pride in getting to know his patients over the years and became well known in the community for his genuine concern and excellent care.

This year marks his retirement after an incredible 59 years of practicing medicine. John shared that he loves his work and will find it challenging to step back into this new season but is looking forward to spending time in his home workshop making canes and walking sticks. Even in his retirement, he will be contributing in a new way to help people meet their community's needs.

I thank Dr. Seidensticker for his tremendous dedication to our community and congratulate him on his retirement. It is because of outstanding health care providers like him that generations of southern Ohio families are able to live healthier and more prosperous lives.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER DOYLE MATTHEWS

(Mr. KEATING of Massachusetts was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Christopher Doyle Matthews, a friend and longtime member of my staff. We were devastated to have learned just a few weeks ago of his passing.

Chris was born in Boston on December 15, 1989, to Richard and Mary-Ellen Matthews and was proudly raised in Scituate, Massachusetts. He grew up loving boats and the water, his parents' classic rock and roll music, and politics.

When columnist Mary McGrory famously observed that "every baby born in Massachusetts is born with a campaign manager's gene," she could have very well been inspired by Chris.

With political instincts that were second to none, Chris was a go-to organizer in Massachusetts politics. He was, without question, one of the Commonwealth's sharpest political minds, a true generational talent.

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Even at a young age, there are not many candidates from the South Shore of Massachusetts who did not seek out Chris' help or his opinion. He served as the chair of the South Shore Democratic Caucus, and as a Democratic leader with the Massachusetts State Committee, the Plymouth County League, and several South Shore town

committees in Massachusetts. Candidates and voters alike trusted Chris because of his belief that government can change people's lives for the better.

Chris' untimely and sudden death has sent shock waves through our congressional family. He served in various positions with us for a decade and a half. He started as a 20-year-old volunteer on my first campaign for Congress and, over time, moved to be my district outreach and communications director when he passed away suddenly and untimely at the age of 36.

At a time in America when some have doubts and when hope can seem remote, remember Chris Matthews if you ever begin to lose faith in this country.

Remember that Chris was more than a congressional aide. He took the belief that through our actions, we can all bring forth needed change, and he brought it with him through many interstate bus rides to canvass distant pivotal States and to the doors of the families he inspired.

Remember through his example that public service is a genuinely noble vocation. As a trusted member of our office, he helped countless veterans, families, and those who could not advocate for themselves.

Remember his laugh and his wry, often biting, humor, insightfully contrasting the way things are to the way things should be. Remember his authentic belief that in this country, people can bring about progress and meaningful change. It was real to him, and his sincerity shone through.

I imagine if Chris wanted us to remember anything, it would be that he was a loving partner and father figure to Molly and Eli, that he was a compassionate and reliable son and brother, and that he was the most steadfast of loyal friends.

Though we wish we had more time with him, his memory will continue to give us faith that one person can significantly make better the lives of all those around him, and all of us in our office certainly know this to be true.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have known Chris Matthews and to honor his life. I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing his commitment to this institution and to the people of Massachusetts. May his memory be a blessing.

RECOGNIZING PAMELA IRVINE

(Mr. CLINE of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary Virginian whose life has been defined by service to others. After 45 years of leadership, Pam Irvine is retiring as president and CEO of Feeding Southwestern Virginia.

When Ms. Irvine founded the organization in 1981, it began with little more than a vision—and even the food bank's first truck caught fire on the road. Undeterred, she persevered, building