

gainful employment. Similarly, there is no effective mechanism in place for enforcing veterans' preference, and we have an Administration that appeals a case against a disabled veteran who had finally won his case before the Merit System Protection Board pursuant to The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998.

It is imperative that re-education and work skills upgrades, including self-employment, be made a priority by those agencies of government that provide these services, especially considering the battalions of seriously and permanently disabled veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.

This indictment of our current federal efforts on behalf of veterans seeking employment is a wake up call. I hope that when the 110th Congress convenes in January 2007, my colleagues will join me in helping create a national strategy to help returning veterans get the job training and employment opportunities they've earned for their service to America.

TRIBUTE TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
SYMPOSIUM ON DEMOCRACY  
CONGRESS TAIPEI, TAIWAN

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the legislators from Pacific Rim countries who will assemble this weekend in Taiwan to explore the role of Congresses in democratic governments. Representatives from 20 Pacific Rim Countries are meeting under the auspices of the Democratic Pacific Union (DPU).

The DPU is a regional organization of Pacific nations that is promoting democracy and peace within that region, in addition to enhancing the multilateral relationships of the participating nations. I applaud the Taiwanese who took the initiative to establish the DPU and its sister organization, the Pacific Congress, I wish the DPU much success in continuing to strengthen the democracies and the vital regional alliances of its Member countries.

TRIBUTE TO THE 2006 CRYSTAL  
FALLS FOREST PARK HIGH  
SCHOOL TROJANS

**HON. BART STUPAK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 2006 Crystal Falls Forest Park High School Trojans. This high school football team has made the entire Upper Peninsula (U.P.) community proud by once again beating the odds and advancing to the Division 8 State Finals game at Ford Field in Detroit.

This was the third straight year that the Crystal Falls Forest Park Trojans advanced to the Division 8 state high school football championship game. These players, their coaches and the entire Crystal Falls Forest Park community should be commended for representing the U.P. at Michigan's state football championship.

In many ways, the Trojans' advancement to the state finals again this year was a classic Cinderella story. Some "inside" football experts had predicted that 2006 would be a rebuilding year for the Trojans, as this year's roster included only 2 seniors. However, what the Trojans lacked in size and experience, they made up for with dedication, heart and teamwork. These 34 young men brought an unselfish attitude to the game that many college and professional players could learn from.

The team's moment of truth for this year's season came on October 13, when they played Bessemer High School. The short-handed Trojans suffered a 14-6 loss, dropping their record to 6-2 for the season and jeopardizing their chances at the playoffs. While many teams might allow a dispiriting loss such as this to derail their playoff ambitions, the Trojans came together as a team to overcome this challenge and rally in the face of adversity. The Trojans followed their setback in Bessemer with 5 straight wins, including 4 in the postseason.

Assistant Coach Dave Graff summed up the winning attitude of this year's Trojans when he said, "We might not be the best team, but we're good enough to get where we're going. They believe in themselves and anything is possible."

The community of Crystal Falls Forest Park and the U.P. truly united behind the Trojans, giving 110 percent of their support. Some of the supporters of the team traveled a long distance—in a short period—to cheer on their team. Crystal Falls Forest Park fans loaded up three buses at the high school at 10:00 p.m. Thanksgiving night and trekked more than 500 miles, arriving at Ford Field at 7:30 a.m. the Friday morning of the game. That gave the fans just a few hours to stretch before the 10 a.m. kickoff!

Mr. Speaker, each member of this team deserves to be recognized and I want to take a moment to share their names: Fred Hubbard; Jim Freeman; Dustin Basirico; Bob Reid; Zach Sawyer; Kyle Roberts; Justin James; Calix Sholander; John Grandahl; Levi Oleksy; Kyle LaVacque; Tony Grandahl; Andrew Bortolini; Matt Sundquist; Bryan LaChapelle; Erik Peterson; Josh Siler; Tim Wheeler; Ethan Uren; Justin Process; Jim Wheeler; Tony Renner; Marcus Smithson; Kevin Takala; Chris McCarthy; William Bortolini; Bill Fennick; Travis Hoenig; Bill Paige; Ed Zarn; Paige Armstrong; Pat Bredy; Ben Shuck; Jake Jacobson; Jeff Sartori; and Andrew Gussert.

I would be remiss if I did not also salute the Trojans' talented coaching staff. Head Coach Bill Santilli and Assistant Coaches Dave Graff, Gerard Valesano, Gene Giuliani, Jeff Chernach and Dan LaPoint should all be commended for helping lead the Crystal Falls Forest Park Trojans to a third state championship game. Managers L.J. Burns, Dan Ballo-Shuck and Lee Graff should also be recognized for their contributions, as should their trainer, Mark Nylund. Together, this talented coaching staff shepherded this year's young team to the state finals.

Mr. Speaker, the Crystal Falls Forest Park football team knew what the late, great Green Bay Packers coach, Vince Lombardi always said, "Winning isn't everything, but wanting to win is." The Trojan team wanted to win more than the so-called "inside" football experts predicted!

Mr. Speaker, I ask the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Crystal Falls Forest Park Trojans football team, their classmates, parents and the community on their exceptional season and in wishing the Trojans well when they retake the field for the 2007 season.

HONORING CHICAGO ASTRONAUT  
JOAN HIGGINBOTHAM

**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Astronaut Joan Higginbotham. Higginbotham is a member of the crew on the Space Shuttle *Discovery* that is scheduled to launch tonight from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. Additionally, she is a fellow Chicagoan, and I wish her the best of luck as she prepares for her first mission, STS 116.

Higginbotham graduated from Chicago's Whitney Young High School in 1982, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 1987. She will be the third African-American woman aboard a NASA mission, and she and her fellow astronaut Robert Curbeam will make history this week on STS 116, the first Space Shuttle mission with two African-American astronauts.

Higginbotham previously worked as a payload engineer at the John F. Kennedy Space Center while also earning two master's degrees from the Florida Institute of Technology.

As a mission specialist on board *Discovery*, Higginbotham's responsibilities will include a complete rewiring of the International Space Station's power supply. She will also have the responsibility of operating the robotic arm to deploy several satellites and to direct payload transfers.

Higginbotham will be joined by Mission Commander Mark Polansky, as well as Robert Curbeam, Sunita Williams, Nicholas Patrick, William Oefelein, and Christer Fuglesang from the European Space Agency, who is the first Swedish astronaut.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing my fellow Chicagoan as well as her fellow astronauts, and to wish them all the best on their launch tonight and their 12-day mission.

HONORING MARILYN W. GROUNDS

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Marilyn W. Grounds for over 10 years of extraordinary service on the board of the Planned Parenthood Association of the Mercer Area.

Ms. Grounds is best described as a "professional volunteer." Active in her children's schools and the community, she was at first focused in serving the arts community. It was the great fortune of the Planned Parenthood Association of the Mercer Area to have her join their board in 1995.

The Planned Parenthood Association of the Mercer Area provides comprehensive reproductive health care which contributes to both