As an advocate for education and youth, I also want to acknowledge how important it is to our nation's future to encourage and raise a new generation of Americans who have the skills and knowledge to succeed both in and out of the classroom. Students like those at Oak Trace Elementary School give me hope that we will accomplish this vital mission. Their outstanding work is an inspiration to students, educators, and parents across the nation. Once again, congratulations to Oak Trace Elementary School. I am very proud of you.

HONORING LINDA B. SWADEL, CHIEF ASSESSOR FROM WESTBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 26, 2015

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Linda B. Swadel, Chief Assessor from Westborough, Massachusetts.

Linda is retiring this November after having served as an Assessor in several communities—including Leicester, Northbridge and Westborough—over the last 30 years as well as serving on various committees for the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers. She is currently serving as the MAAO Legislative Committee Co-Chair.

Like assessors throughout Massachusetts, Linda has helped to provide our cities and towns with the critical financial services essential to supporting strong budgets for our communities' schools, public safety, recreation, and so many other services our families count on every day.

She is currently the Chairman of the Board of Assessors and Chief Assessor in Westborough and she serves on the Massachusetts Farmland Valuation Advisory Sub-Committee as well as the Legislative Task Force for the Council on Aging.

She has served on various other MAAO Committees in her tenure, such as the Education Committee and the Telecom Committee. She is a recipient of the MAAO's Wilson Award as well as the MAAO's Past President's Award. Both of which are given to members for their service and dedication to the profession and the Association.

Linda is also a two-time Past President of the Worcester County Assessors Association and I am so grateful for the difference she has made in our community.

Throughout her career, she has shared her passion for her profession by speaking at conferences, inspiring and helping her peers to grow in their own careers.

For all of Linda's hard work and dedication, I am proud to recognize her as she retires from a career dedicated to helping others and keeping our communities strong.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARTHA BRUCKNER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dr. Martha Bruckner of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for her selection as Iowa's 2015–16 School Superintendent of the Year. Under Dr. Bruckner's leadership the Council Bluffs Community School District has seen great successes, including improved graduation rates and increased academic achievement.

This award is presented by the School Administrators of Iowa, based on standards that include a shared vision of learning, a presence of school culture, a safe and effective learning environment, engagement with the community, integrity and fairness, and a dedication to addressing the issues facing public education. Dr. Bruckner embodies these criteria with her passion for education and her leadership within the Council Bluffs School District. She has shown that a commitment to improving the learning environment within a school district can and will yield positive results for students.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Dr. Bruckner for her dedicated service to the Council Bluffs Community School District, and more importantly, to each and every student she oversees. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Dr. Bruckner for receiving this outstanding award and in wishing her and her students nothing but continued success.

CONGRATULATING THE 2016 VIRGINIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR, MRS. NATALIE DIFUSCO-FUNK

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 26, 2015

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I submit these remarks to congratulate the 2016 Virginia Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Natalie DiFusco-Funk. She is a fifth-grade teacher at West Salem Elementary School in Salem, Virginia, where my two sons attend school.

According to press reports, DiFusco-Funk earned her Bachelor of Arts in Education and her Master of Education at Boston College, and in 2013, earned her National Board Certification in Literacy. She is a 12-year veteran of the classroom who has been teaching in Salem City Schools for five years. Previously, she taught in Botetourt County as a reading specialist and also taught in schools in Massachusetts.

''Natalie is an exceptional teacher and a consummate professional who positively changes the lives of young people and facilitates the growth and development of her colleagues,'' said Salem Superintendent H. Alan Seibert.

DiFusco-Funk, who has said she felt called to teach since she was in fifth grade, is the first Salem City Schools teacher to have earned this recognition. She will now compete to be the National Teacher of the Year.

She said, ''I told my students—like Spider-Man says, 'With great power comes great responsibility,' and so it is my responsibility to represent the field of education well and to speak on behalf of all the teachers of Virginia, and take it to the White House.''

On behalf of many in the district, I thank Mrs. Natalie DiFusco-Funk for all she has done for our area, and congratulate her for this hard-earned recognition and praise. Best wishes for many more years of success.

CONGRATULATING OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 26, 2015

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding school in my district that is being honored as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School. It is a pleasure to congratulate Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School in Carmel, Indiana in celebration of this special occasion.

The National Blue Ribbon designation, given by the United States Department of Education, is awarded to both public and private schools across our great nation. Started by President Reagan and given annually since 1982, the award celebrates great American schools that achieve very high learning standards or are making significant improvements in the academic achievements of their students. In my district and across the country, the award recognizes the great educators, students, and parents who have worked so hard to ensure Indiana's children reach their full potential and achieve academic success.

For all of these reasons and many more, I am so proud that Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School is receiving this prestigious designation. It is a wonderful acknowledgement of the school's commitment to providing young Hoosiers an exceptional education. While hundreds of schools nationwide were nominated, only 335 schools were designated as 2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools. Of the 335 schools, Our Lady of Mount Carmel was 1 of 50 private schools to receive recognition, making this recognition all the more impressive.

Serving children from kindergarten through eighth grade, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School provides its students with an outstanding education in both academics and the Catholic faith. It is a Four Star School, awarded by the state of Indiana. The school achieved this designation by placing in the top 25th percentile of schools in three ISTEP-based categories. Our Lady consistently provides excellence in education by facilitating a Christ-centered educational community that creates a vibrant learning community, provides opportunities to serve others, and prepares students for lifelong learning. As a mother whose children attended Catholic school, I applaud Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School for its work to ensure its students engage in significant acts of community service and remain dedicated to carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ.

As an advocate for education and youth, I also want to acknowledge how important it is to our nation's future to encourage and raise a new generation of Americans who have the skills and knowledge to succeed both in and out of the classroom. Students like those at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School give me hope that we will accomplish this vital mission. Their outstanding work is an inspiration to students, educators, and parents across the nation. Once again, congratulations to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School. I am very proud of you.