

HONORING THE 2017 ACADEMY NOMINEES OF THE 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 12, 2016

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, every year, more high school seniors from the 11th Congressional District trade in varsity jackets for navy pea coats, Air Force flight suits, and Army brass buckles than most other districts in the country. But this is nothing new—our area has repeatedly sent an above average portion of its sons and daughters to the nation's military academies for decades.

This fact should not come as a surprise. The educational excellence of area schools is well known and has long been a magnet for families looking for the best environment in which to raise their children. Our graduates are skilled not only in mathematics, science, and social studies, but also have solid backgrounds in sports, debate teams, and other extracurricular activities. This diverse upbringing makes military academy recruiters sit up and take note—indeed, many recruiters know our towns and schools by name.

Since the 1830's, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve? In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. This was not an act of an imperial Congress bent on controlling every aspect of Government. Rather, the procedure still used today was, and is, a further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to unfettered nepotism and handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process—the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

My Academy Review Board is composed of local citizens who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, to their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area; many are veterans. Though from diverse backgrounds and professions, they all share a common dedication that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as true for most volunteer panels, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Being on the board requires hard work and an objective mind. Members have the responsibility of interviewing upwards of 50 outstanding young men and women every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. High school seniors mail personal

information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy once they become interested in attending. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other activities. At this time, they also inform my office of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In late November, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of 2 days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

This year the board interviewed over 40 applicants. The Board's recommendations were then forwarded to the academies, where recruiters reviewed files and notified applicants and my office of their final decision on admission.

As these highly motivated and talented young men and women go through the academy nominating process, never let us forget the sacrifice they are preparing to make: to defend our country and protect our citizens. This holds especially true at a time when our nation is fighting the war against terrorism. Whether it is in the Middle East, Africa or other troubled spots around the world, no doubt we are constantly reminded that wars are fought by the young. And, while our military missions are both important and dangerous, it is reassuring to know that we continue to put America's best and brightest in command.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2017, 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Jordan Behrle, North Caldwell, West Essex HS.

James Coyne, Chatham, Chatham HS.
Arielle Fortes, Parsippany, Parsippany HS.
Kurt Hill, Pompton Plains, Pequannock HS.

Erik Jensen, Mendham, Randolph HS.
Noor Khan, Livingston, Livingston HS.
Benjamin Lee, Sparta, Sparta HS.
Pranay Malla, Chatham, Chatham HS.
Matthew Manion, Morris Plains, Morristown HS.

Michael Matarazzo, Cedar Grove, Cedar Grove HS.

Jamie Moul, West Orange, West Orange HS.

MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

Shane Arcilla, Cedar Knolls, Morris Catholic HS.

Anthony Corso, Fairfield, West Essex HS.
Kyle Frey, Sparta, Pope John XXIII HS.
Travis Healy, Andover, Pope John XXIII HS.

Matthew Russo, Cedar Grove, St. Peter's Prep.

NAVAL ACADEMY

Dean Caravela, West Caldwell, James Caldwell HS.

Robert Dromsky-Reed, Kinnelon, Kinnelon HS.

Caroline Duemling, Chatham, Chatham HS.

Shannon Fashbender, Andover, Lenape Valley HS.

Kyle Gonzalez, Wanaque, Lakeland Regional HS.

Matthew Makuch, Lincoln Park, The Academy for Math, Science and Engineering.

Brandon Maravi, Wayne, St. Joseph's HS.
Paul Malatesta, Chatham, Chatham HS.

Emma Noury, Sparta, Sussex County Technical School.

Steven Orciuoli, Livingston, Livingston HS.

Brendan Reilly, Mendham, West Morris Mendham HS.

Grace Sheehan, Fairfield, Mt. Saint Dominic Academy.

Helena Seijas, Mountain Lakes, Mountain Lakes HS.

Jake Siciliano, Fairfield, West Essex HS.

MILITARY ACADEMY

Dylan Berrier, Lake Hopatcong, Morris Catholic HS.

Andrew Bowlus, Carlisle Barracks, PA., Carlisle Area HS.

Timothy Cieslak, Wayne, Wayne Valley HS.

Michael Flanagan, Florham Park, St. Peter's Prep.

Anthony Giachin, Livingston, Newark Academy.

Wilson Maya, Madison, Morristown HS.

Rebecca Morel, Mendham, Villa Walsh Academy.

Ivan Peters, Boonton, Mountain Lakes HS.

Matthew Rothman, Pequannock, Pequannock HS.

Minkyu Yang, Livingston, Livingston HS.

TRAVON GODFREY

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 12, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of my constituent, Travon Godfrey, who was tragically killed by gun violence on November 28th, 2016. In this tragedy, Oakland lost a community leader, a voice of truth, and a hopeful soul.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of meeting Travon at my town hall on gun violence, where he shared the painful impact that gun violence had in his life. He stated: "It shouldn't even be like that—especially when our kids can't grow up to see the age of 21. We can't even see what it feels like to be grown."

Travon was right. In 2016 alone, more than 13,000 lives have been lost to senseless gun violence.

That is 13,000 lives too many.

Mr. Speaker, Travon was just 19 years young. His life was senselessly cut short by the very violence he was working to prevent.

I do, however, take solace in the fact that he did not let his age prevent him from speaking out against injustice. He did not sit idly by or allow the weight of his pain at losing 9 friends to gun violence to consume him. Instead, he got involved.

Travon was a tireless advocate for his community, his friends and public safety.

He reminded us that senseless gun violence can be stopped—if elected officials find the political will to enact common sense gun reforms. It breaks my heart to stand here today and share his story—a story that he worked so hard to prevent.

Mr. Speaker, we must live in the light of Travon and prevent gun violence from stealing more young people in our community and every community across the nation.

Thank you, Travon, for being an example of what courage and strength looks like. You spoke truth to power in so many ways.

My thoughts and prayers are with the family of Travon during this very difficult time and in