

Katie's Air Force career is impressive and she has received several awards and recognition for her work ethic and dedication to her patients. Her most impressive and recent award was the 2017 Air Force Medical Service Aerospace Medical Technician of the Year for Air Medical Command, coined by 19th, MDG Commander, Col. Dawn Brooks.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Airman Cogbill for this prestigious award and thank her for her selfless service to our great nation and the United States Air Force.

TRIBUTE TO THE RAILSWEST  
MUSEUM

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 14, 2017*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the RailsWest Museum of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for maintaining 150 years of railroad history in Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County, Iowa. RailsWest Museum is located in the former depot of the Chicago, Rock Island Pacific railroads.

The RailsWest Museum is operated by the Historical Society of Pottawattamie County and the building and grounds have been renovated to preserve its rich history. The depot that houses the current museum was built in 1899, but the original depot was built in 1870. During its years in operation the depot saw thousands of local soldiers leave Council Bluffs for military duty, and it was also a welcome sight when many of them returned home after their military service. The Rock Island Line's last day of operation was March 31, 1980. Today, the museum promotes 150 years of railroad history with displays, artifacts, and exhibits.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate the RailsWest Museum for their dedicated and devoted service in preserving the railroad history of Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County. It is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the RailsWest Museum's accomplishments and in wishing the staff and volunteers nothing but the best.

CONGRATULATING KEWANEE, ILLINOIS FOR BEING NAMED A FINALIST FOR THE 2017 GOVERNOR'S HOMETOWN AWARD

**HON. CHERI BUSTOS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 14, 2017*

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kewanee, Illinois for being named a finalist for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award due to its outstanding Step Ladder Tutoring Program.

The Step Ladder Tutoring Program targets middle school special education, borderline, and struggling general education students who need academic assistance. Certified middle school teachers serve as site coordinators for the Step Ladder Tutoring Program, while a

system of community volunteers, middle school students, high school students, college students and AmeriCorps members serve as tutors for the program. During the 2014–2015 school year, all eighth grade students receiving assistance were promoted to the ninth grade. 75 percent of the students had improved skills in math and reading, and 80 percent of the students had improved attendance rates and an overall improved attitude toward school and learning.

The generous and ambitious volunteers and leaders of the Step Ladder Tutoring Program make me especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Kewanee, Illinois for being named a finalist for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award and recognize all who organize and contribute to the Step Ladder Tutoring Program for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE  
RETIREMENT OF MARK WHITE

**HON. DAVID A. TROTT**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 14, 2017*

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the retirement of Wixom, Michigan resident, Senior Inspector Mark White of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection.

We honor Mark for his years of bravery and protection of our land, sea, and air borders.

During his time at the Detroit border, Mark committed himself to the interception of contraband. He apprehended numerous pieces of drug paraphernalia and in 1995; he seized nearly \$2.7 million dollars' worth of munitions bound for illegal exportation in Operation Exodus.

His most notable act of bravery occurred in October of 1997 at the Detroit Windsor Tunnel. A gunman under the influence of drugs attempted to hijack cars at inspection lanes and shot a civilian. Mark fatally wounded the gunman and provided first aid to the injured civilian. This act of heroism earned him a number of awards, including the U.S. Customs Service Meritorious Service Award for Valor.

Since 2000, Mark has worked as the Senior Inspector at Oakland County International Airport and spends his free time as a lacrosse coach for the Walled Lake Gladiators.

After 31 years of service, Mark will retire this December, and will return to his home state of Pennsylvania with his wife and daughter.

I applaud Senior Inspector Mark White for his service to the State of Michigan.

THE LONG ARM OF CHINA: EXPORTING AUTHORITARIANISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 14, 2017*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I made the following remarks at the

hearing held by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China which I co-chair with Senator Marco Rubio:

This hearing is the second in a series looking at China's foreign influence operations and the impact on universally-recognized human rights. With the Congress and U.S. public focused on Russian influence operations, Chinese efforts have received little scrutiny and are not well understood. This must change.

Attempts by the Chinese government to guide, buy, or coerce political influence, control discussion of "sensitive" topics, and export its authoritarian practices globally are widespread and pervasive.

Long-time allies Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have been rocked by scandals involving Chinese sponsored influence operations targeting politicians, businesses, and academic institutions.

Australia in particular is in the midst of a national crisis and all like-minded democratic allies should be supporting their efforts to root out those elements intended to corrupt or coopt Australian political and academic institutions.

All countries pursue soft power initiatives to promote a "positive" global image and build goodwill, but the Chinese government's use of technology, coercion, pressure, and the promise of market access is unprecedented and poses clear challenges to the freedoms of democratic societies.

An example of Chinese rewards given to companies and individuals for abiding by the Chinese government's rules is the case of publisher Springer Nature, the world's largest academic book publisher.

Springer Nature removed more than 1,000 articles from the websites of the Journal of Chinese Political Science and International Politics in order to comply with China's censorship directives and was later "rewarded" for its censorship by signing a lucrative strategic partnership with the Chinese tech giant Tencent Holdings.

In addition to academic publishers, the Chinese government is going to school on college and universities. American institutions are being seduced by the promised infusion of much-needed wealth from China.

But one always has to pay a price—play by China's rules, don't ruffle feathers and don't discuss or write about "sensitive topics." Universities committed to academic freedom are bound to run into problems eventually.

I have held two hearings on the threat to academic freedom posed by Confucius Institutes and the creation of U.S. campuses in China.

We should all be for creative research partnerships and expanding educational opportunities for U.S. students, but not at the cost of fundamental freedoms.

I have asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) to investigate academic partnerships between the U.S. colleges and the Chinese government. The first report came out last Spring.

The GAO is now in the process of conducting investigations of Confucius Institutes. I have written to all U.S. colleges with Confucius Institutes and asked them to make their contracts public and available for public inspection.

Many foreign businesses in China have already faced similar dilemmas. Some, like Apple, which recently removed from its Chinese app store applications that help users