

After spending her youth in Puerto Rico and completing her high school education at the age of sixteen, Ms. Vélez attended the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, where she received a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science and Government. Following the completion of her undergraduate studies, Ms. Vélez went on to complete two Master's degrees—the first in Political Science at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the second in Public Relations at Sacred Heart University in Santurce, Puerto Rico.

In 1980, Iris began her eight-year teaching career as a Professor of Political Science at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico but, in 1988, she was able to combine her passions of nature, political science, and public affairs while serving as the Public Affairs Specialist for the National Park Service at the San Juan National Historic Site. After two years of service, Ms. Vélez moved on to work for the United States Forest Service first as a Public Affairs Specialist and later as Program Manager.

In February of 2017, Ms. Vélez accepted a Congressional Fellowship in my Washington, D.C. office through the Brookings Institution. During her time in my office, Iris was a vital member of my team having handled legislative issues relating to natural resources, forestry, and energy policy. Iris was also instrumental in organizing constituent outreach programs to teach fire safety to the people of the California's Twenty First Congressional District. Outside of work, Iris enjoys meeting new people, exploring different places, and attending live musical performances.

On December 15, 2017, Ms. Vélez's time in my office will come to an end as she moves on to continue her dedication to public service. While I know she is very excited about her upcoming journey, she will be greatly missed as a member of my team.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in commending Iris Lizzette Vélez for her public service to the people of California's Central Valley and wishing her well as she begins the next chapter of her life.

RECOGNIZING TYLER BUSSERT
FOR HIS STATE TITLE IN CLASS
1A GOLF

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Tyler Bussert, a senior at Riverdale High School, for earning the Class 1A title for the Illinois State Golf Championship.

Tyler Bussert shot a 36–37–73 both days at the state meet for a 146 total to earn his title as state champion, and I would like to recognize Tyler for this tremendous accomplishment. Tyler's first place win follows a ninth place finish as a sophomore and second place finish as a junior in the state championship. As a former athlete, I understand the amount of hard work and commitment it takes to earn such a title. Tyler is a competitor with strong dedication and work ethic. I am proud to see such young talent in our community, and to see him represent Port Byron on a state-wide platform.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Tyler Bussert on his title, and I join the rest of the community in wishing him every success in the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE
OF PHILLIP TODD STEPHENS

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Phillip Todd Stephens and his over thirteen years of dedicated service to Team Brady and the people of the Eighth Congressional District of Texas.

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Todd began his life of public service as a Medical Specialist in the United States Army, which included a posting in the Demilitarized Zone of the Korean Peninsula.

Upon completing his service in the military, Todd went on to earn two Bachelor's Degrees in Philosophy and Political Science at the University of Kentucky and a Master's Degree in Political Science from Eastern Kentucky University.

Soon after his graduation, Todd returned to public service and began working in the Kentucky General Assembly—first in the office of the President of the State Senate and later as a bill drafter for the Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection.

In 2004, Todd relocated to Washington, D.C., where he served as a Legislative Assistant in my congressional office for two years. Dedicated to working for the people of the Eighth District, Todd and his wife, Sarah, relocated their young family to The Woodlands, TX, in 2006. Todd served as my Director of Regional Issues, handling disaster relief efforts, local transportation issues, and many additional policy concerns directly affecting our communities. In 2013, Todd began working tirelessly as the District Director of my congressional offices in Conroe and Huntsville.

Todd's steady and caring personality has guided him throughout his many years of serv-

ice, and his dry humor and wit have time and again worked to encourage those around him and build relationships with the people of our community. He is an active member of Celebration Church and a volunteer with his son's Boy Scout troop—in addition to being a Texas burger and BBQ connoisseur.

Todd and Sarah, who also worked as my District Director, along with their children, Avery and Owen, are a perfect illustration of a family committed to serving their community.

On December 28, 2017, Todd will complete his final day of over thirteen years in my congressional office. While he will be sorely missed by my staff and me, I am fully confident that he will excel in his new role with The Woodlands Township. I am proud to join the entire Eighth District of Texas in thanking Todd for his years of public service and wishing him the best in the next chapter of his life.

TRIBUTE TO WAHL OPTICAL

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 Wahl Optical of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for celebrating 80 years in business. Wahl Optical was founded in 1937 by Dr. G.H. Wahl. Today, they have two optometrists on staff who perform many services for their customers.

Bob Wahl, the current owner of his family business, has been working there since 1977. He came into the store to get his glasses fixed and started waiting on customers and answering the telephone. His father saw this and convinced his son to come on board to work in the family business. Bob decided to stay and give it a chance.

Over the years, Wahl Optical has built the reputation of being a friendly business, willing to go above and beyond for their customers. Bob said, "I take a lot of pride in making sure people in the Council Bluffs area have every opportunity to look as fashionable as they want to be."

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate Wahl Optical for its many years of dedicated and devoted service to Council Bluffs, Iowa and the surrounding area. It is with great pride that I recognize them today and I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Wahl Optical for this outstanding achievement and in wishing them nothing but continued success.