

services provide these individuals the stability to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. We thank Ozone House for their commitment to supporting and protecting homeless youth. Their work embodies the duty we have to our community and to empower those most in need.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ozone House for 50 years of distinguished service. Their efforts to support homeless and high-risk youth in the Washtenaw community is worthy of commendation.

RECOGNIZING COMMAND CHIEF
MASTER SERGEANT MELANIE K.
NOEL

HON. LARRY BUCSHON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Mr. BUCSHON. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize and congratulate a tremendous Airman and native of Vincennes, Indiana, Command Chief Master Sergeant Melanie K. Noel, on the occasion of her retirement from the U.S. Air Force after 27 years of distinguished military service to this great Nation.

Chief Master Sergeant Noel's outstanding career has culminated with her final assignment as the Command Chief Master Sergeant for the Air Force District of Washington. Chief Noel represents the highest enlisted executive level of leadership in the Air Force District of Washington and advises the commanding general on all issues regarding the readiness, training, welfare, morale, proper utilization, and progress of more than 40,000 Air Force military and civilian members in more than 500 locations across 108 countries. Prior to assuming her current position, Chief Noel faithfully served as the 6th Air Mobility Wing's Command Chief Master Sergeant and was also the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the U.S. Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.

Chief Master Sergeant Noel entered the U.S. Air Force on April 9, 1992 as a security forces specialist and was later chosen for retraining into the field of personnel administration. Her honorable service has spanned numerous overseas and stateside assignments including two European countries, three States, the District of Columbia, and a deployment in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In 2006, Chief Noel was competitively selected to become a First Sergeant, spending several years caring for the service's newest Airmen at the "Gateway to the Air Force." Recognizing her leadership potential, the Air Force continued to challenge her with increased responsibilities as an instructor at the U.S. Air Force First Sergeants Academy. Excelling in this demanding position, Chief Noel taught fellow senior noncommissioned officers the intricacies of equitable discipline, professional development, and esprit de corps. Her superb performance at the First Sergeants Academy garnered the attention of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Roy, who selected Chief Noel to become the service's first-ever Enlisted Legislative Fellow in the Nation's Capital.

As a true testament to Chief Master Sergeant Noel's exceptional career, she served

as not only the U.S. Air Force's first Enlisted Legislative Fellow but also its sole enlisted representative on Capitol Hill in 2013. During this period, Chief Noel was assigned to the office of Representative Niki Tsongas from Massachusetts. With the Congresswoman's position as Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, Chief Noel played a key role as her lead staffer during the headline-making Benghazi hearings. Moreover, she worked diligently to increase congressional awareness of impacts to both the Department of Defense and national security community caused by the 2013 federal government shutdown. Finally, her tireless efforts were critical to the bipartisan passage and implementation of the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act.

Chief Master Sergeant Noel clearly epitomizes the finest qualities of a military leader. Throughout her tenure, she has been instrumental in advocating for Airmen across the globe while strengthening the total force team through innovative solutions, focused resiliency, and exceptional leadership development. Her unrivaled expertise and exemplary professionalism have further resulted in numerous accolades, including the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, as well as annual award recognition at the squadron, group, and wing levels within the U.S. Air Force. Additionally, Chief Noel was the recipient of the Distinguished Honor Graduate Award at the Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress and a grateful Nation, I extend our deepest appreciation to Chief Master Sergeant Melanie K. Noel for her many years of extraordinary dedication and selfless military service. There is no question that the U.S. Air Force, Department of Defense, and United States have significantly benefited from Chief Noel's visionary leadership and devotion to the cause of freedom. I wish nothing but the very best for her and her family in the future.

CONGRATULATING EVERETT
WHITCHER ON WINNING THE CITIZEN
OF THE YEAR AWARD
THROUGH THE KEWANEE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Everett Whitcher for winning the Citizen of the Year Award through the Kewanee Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Whitcher's dedication to organizations in the Kewanee community is admirable.

Mr. Whitcher is a graduate of Wethersefield High School and went on to pursue his career in the grocery business. Since 1989, Mr. Whitcher has been the owner of the Super Value grocery store, which is now Save-A-Lot in Kewanee, Illinois. In 2015, Mr. Whitcher needed to keep up with the demands of the community so he moved his Kewanee store to a bigger location on South Main Street where he expanded his food and meat inventory. Mr.

Whitcher is an active participant in the local community and has contributed a great deal to Kewanee's economy. In addition to running his business, he assists all the food pantries in Kewanee and donates pet food to the Humane Society. Mr. Whitcher has been an active member of the Kiwanis Club since 2007 and serves on the Board of Directors in a continued effort to give back to his neighbors. I admire Mr. Whitcher's service to the community and thank him for his many contributions as he accepts the Citizen of the Year Award.

It is because of community leaders like Mr. Whitcher that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Everett Whitcher for winning the Citizen of the Year Award given by the Kewanee Chamber of Commerce.

RECOGNIZING THE ST. AUGUSTINE
ART ASSOCIATION

HON. JOHN H. RUTHERFORD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Augustine Art Association (STAAA) on the 95th anniversary of its founding in 1924.

Founded by Spanish explorers in 1565, St. Augustine, Florida, is the oldest continuously inhabited European-established settlement in the continental United States, making it our nation's first city. The STAAA plays an integral role in preserving and promoting the artistic heritage of St. Augustine, and has been described as the epicenter of the local art community. The STAAA Art Center is open year-round and is free to the public, welcoming roughly 10,000 visitors annually. Its gallery hosts exhibitions, concerts, workshops, classes, lectures, and other art-related events. More than 1,000 artists of all backgrounds display their artwork during the gallery's season of juried exhibitions. These contemporary artists make up St. Augustine's present-day art colony.

The STAAA outreach programs serve many, including the blind, local public school students, and patients and caregivers at Flagler Hospital. Additionally, elder groups, community businesses, and others all benefit from STAAA's user-friendly gallery in the heart of St. Augustine. I am pleased to recognize STAAA for its contributions to our unique local culture, history, and community.

RECOGNIZING THE BICENTENNIAL
OF VANDALIA, ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Vandalia, Illinois, which is celebrating its bicentennial this year.

Located in Fayette County, Vandalia was the state's first capital city. Situated on the Kaskaskia River, the Illinois General Assembly first met in Vandalia in December 1820. At the time, the state treasurer transacted business