

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1607

Recognizing the significant global impact and legacy of Peter Westbrook in the sport of fencing in the United States and the work that he has done to improve the lives of underserved and vulnerable youth.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 4, 2024

Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mrs. McIVER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the significant global impact and legacy of Peter Westbrook in the sport of fencing in the United States and the work that he has done to improve the lives of underserved and vulnerable youth.

Whereas Peter Westbrook (hereafter referred to as “Westbrook”) was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 16, 1952, to Ulysses and Mariko;

Whereas Westbrook grew up in the Haynes Avenue public housing project in Newark, New Jersey with his mother and sister during the 1967 Newark riots;

Whereas, in an effort to keep him off of the often violent streets of Newark, Westbrook’s mother enrolled him in

fencing classes from a young age where he found that he had a natural talent for the sport;

Whereas Westbrook earned a spot as a fencing recruit and a full scholarship to New York University;

Whereas Westbrook went on to compete in six Olympic Games between 1976 and 1996;

Whereas Westbrook won the bronze medal in the individual saber competition at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, making him the first African American to win an Olympic medal in the sport and the first American to win an Olympic medal in the sport since 1960;

Whereas Westbrook won the United States National Individual Sabre Championship on 13 occasions;

Whereas Westbrook was inducted into the New York University Athletics Hall of Fame in 1985, the United States Fencing Association Hall of Fame in 1996, the Sports Hall of Fame of New Jersey in 2002, and the International Sports Hall of Fame in 2021;

Whereas Westbrook has been able to celebrate his achievements with his family, including with Susann Miles-Westbrook, his wife of more than 20 years;

Whereas, in 1991, Westbrook established the Peter Westbrook Foundation (hereafter referred to as the “Foundation”), an organization dedicated to helping young persons, between the ages of 8 to 18, from underserved communities in New York City to learn not only fencing from world-class coaches but also academic and life skills;

Whereas the Foundation has a long legacy of producing stellar athletes in fencing, sending 17 students in total to the

Olympic Games, and having sent at least 1 student to each Olympic Games since 2000;

Whereas Lauren Scruggs, a Foundation alum, won the silver medal in the women's foil competition at the Olympic Games in Paris in the summer of 2024 and became the first Black woman from the United States to win an individual Olympic fencing medal;

Whereas one-third of the United States fencing team that competed at the Olympic Games in summer of 2020 were students from the Foundation;

Whereas the Foundation exposes Black youth to the sport of fencing which is a predominantly White sport, promoting Black excellence in the sport of fencing and more broadly;

Whereas 85 percent of the students at the Foundation are Black or Latino, 49 percent of the students at the Foundation are girls, and 77 percent of the of families of the students at the Foundation have a household income that is below the average median income in the area where they reside;

Whereas the Foundation has served more than 4,000 youth and provides free fencing lessons to a variety of communities, giving youth from low- and moderate-income families an opportunity to participate in fencing;

Whereas the Foundation helps uplift at-risk youth academically, as well as athletically and personally;

Whereas the Foundation provides tutoring, homework assistance, and standardized test preparation to the students at the Foundation from a team of licensed educational professionals and college students;

Whereas 100 percent of the students that attend the Foundation graduate from high school;

Whereas 95 percent of the students that attend the Foundation attend college;

Whereas 100 percent of the students that attend the Foundation increased their SAT scores;

Whereas 80 percent of the students that attend the Foundation improved their grade point average;

Whereas alumni of the Foundation routinely return to volunteer, teach, and mentor current students;

Whereas the Foundation teaches young persons values such as good sportsmanship, self-confidence, maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle, and the importance of academic achievement;

Whereas Westbrook continues to have a profound impact on young persons in New York City, giving young persons opportunities for growth and development that would not have otherwise been available to such young persons; and

Whereas the Foundation prioritizes cultivating a close-knit, inclusive community that values teaching the athletic and life skills learned at the Foundation to future generations of fencers: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) Recognizes that Westbrook was the first Af-
3 rican-American man to accomplish many feats in the
4 fencing community;

5 (2) Recognizes Westbrook's athletic achieve-
6 ment and indelible legacy in Black sports history;
7 and

- 1 (3) Recognizes the work that the Foundation
- 2 has done to diversify the sport of fencing and in-
- 3 crease social and economic opportunities for youth in
- 4 underserved communities.

