

Lower Peninsula area of Virginia. Phoebus High School's championship this year marked the 13th time in the last fifteen years that a Peninsula District team has won a state title in football.

Although very accomplished in football, Phoebus High's legacy of excellence is not limited to the field of athletics. Under the Direction of Principal Robert Johnson, the Phoebus faculty seeks to inspire all students to strive for excellence and achievement in the classroom, in their extracurricular activities and in their communities.

Phoebus has two innovative programs aimed at expanding the learning experience outside of the traditional classroom. One of them involves courses that prepare students for careers in technology. As host of the Hampton School Division's Information Design and Engineering Academy (IDEA), Phoebus offers magnet career classes in pre-engineering, design and information technology, and media technology and design. These courses provide the students a foundation to prepare for college classes and jobs in the technology sector. Phoebus is also home to the Blue Phantom Inn, a student-run restaurant that gives students an opportunity to develop their culinary arts skills. The restaurant program was nationally recognized in Southern Living magazine.

So we would like to extend our enthusiastic congratulations to Coach Stan Sexton, his coaching staff, the players on the Phoebus High School Phantoms and to all of Phoebus High School students, families, friends and fans, for their continued dedication to excellence in winning the Group AAA Division 5 Virginia High School League state football champions of 2011.

ENDING AMERICA'S WAR IN IRAQ

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2011

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, President Obama deserves tremendous credit for ending America's war in Iraq, honoring his commitment to bring all U.S. troops home by the end of 2011. As commander-in-chief he has always set the appropriate course of action in Iraq while always honoring the service and sacrifice of our troops and our military families.

The Iraq War has been a tragedy for far too many American and Iraqi families. The human costs of this war—in deaths, suffering, and permanent loss—cannot be calculated. U.S. troops served and fought with a profound sense of duty to our country. For this, all Americans should be grateful. The family members and loved ones of our brave troops also endured tremendous sacrifices that can never be repaid. Those selfless Americans who sacrificed their lives and bodies in service to our country, must always be remembered and Congress must always fulfill the promises it has made to our veterans and their families.

At home we cannot ignore the war's other costs. The Iraq War directly added \$800 billion to the nation's debt—a bill that will be paid by our children and grandchildren. Meeting the long-term health care needs of Iraq war veterans will require hundreds of billions more for

decades to come and that's an obligation Congress must never balk at paying.

Over the past nine years, my opposition to this war has been well known. Iraq was a war of political choice, not strategic necessity. While Iraq is no longer ruled by a dictator, the human price the Iraqi people paid in death, destruction, violence, and misery casts a very dark shadow over their country's future.

In the final analysis, America's war in Iraq was a strategic and human tragedy that must never be repeated. Now, as armchair generals in their disgraced neo-conservative pinstripes plot a new misadventure, this time with Iran, the American people must not be deceived, not be driven by fear, and not yield to another expensive and painful war of choice.

Mr. Speaker, I request the attached New York Times editorial regarding the end of America's war in Iraq entitled "A Formal End" be included.

[From the New York Times, Dec. 15, 2011]

A FORMAL END

It is a relief that the American role in the misguided Iraq war is finally over. It came to an official close on Thursday with an appropriately subdued ceremony in Baghdad. We mourn the nearly 4,500 American troops and tens of thousands of Iraqis who lost their lives.

After so much pain and sacrifice, Iraqis now have the responsibility for making their own better future. The fighting is not over, and success is still a long shot. The United States has a major role to play: encouraging, supporting and goading Iraq's leaders to make the long-delayed political compromises that are their only hope for building a stable democracy.

The fact that Saddam Hussein is gone is a genuine cause for celebration. But the list of errors and horrors in this war is inexcusably long, starting with a rush to invasion based on manipulated intelligence.

The Bush administration had no plan for governing the country once Saddam was deposed. The Iraqi economy still bears the scars from the first frenzied days of looting. The decision to disband the Sunni-dominated Iraqi Army helped unleash five years of sectarian strife that has not fully abated. Iraq's political system remains deeply riven by ethnic and religious differences.

America's reputation has yet to fully recover from the horrors of Abu Ghraib. The country is still paying a huge price for President George W. Bush's decision to short-change the war in Afghanistan. American policy makers, for generations to come, must study these mistakes carefully and ensure that they are not repeated.

As for Iraq today, the authoritarian tendencies of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki are deeply troubling. A member of the Shiite majority that was badly persecuted under Saddam, he has been far more interested in payback than inclusion.

Washington has pushed him over the years—but, often, not hard enough.

The Baghdad government promised jobs to 100,000 members of the Sunni Awakening movement—insurgents whose decision to switch sides helped end the civil war—but only half that have been hired. Parliament still needs to enact a law, called for in the Constitution, that would provide a legal basis for determining who should be prosecuted for supporting Saddam's Baath Party or other extremist ideologies. Iraq's leaders have many more issues to resolve. Incredibly, they have still not decided how to divide the country's oil wealth. There is no agreement on who will control the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, which is claimed by both

Baghdad and the semiautonomous Kurdish regional government.

Iraq's oil production still has not rebounded, and basic services like electricity are still woefully inadequate. Iraq needs an impartial justice system. Washington has pressed Baghdad for years to end corruption and build a representative government. It will need to keep pressing.

After investing billions of dollars, the United States has had more success rebuilding Iraq's security forces. But Iraqi and American commanders say these forces are not ready to fully protect the country against insurgents or potentially hostile neighbors. There are critical weaknesses in intelligence, air defenses, artillery and logistics.

The Obama administration was unable to reach a new defense agreement with Baghdad that would have allowed several thousand American troops to stay behind as backup. We hope that the Iraqi Army will do better than expected. The administration must be prepared to offer limited help if the army does get into serious trouble.

President Obama, who first ran for office campaigning against the war, has never wavered on his promise to bring the troops home. The last few thousand will be out of Iraq by year's end. We celebrate their return. But this country must never forget the intolerable costs of a war started on arrogance and lies.

RECOGNIZING CROSSROADS INDUSTRIAL SERVICES, BOSMA INDUSTRIES AND THE ABILITYONE PROGRAM

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2011

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize two organizations in Indianapolis, Crossroads Industrial Services and Bosma Enterprises. Both of these organizations are a part of the AbilityOne Program, which has helped more than 47,000 Americans who are blind or who have significant disabilities gain skills and training that ultimately led to gainful employment.

Together, these organizations employ 189 people in Indianapolis, jobs made possible by the AbilityOne Program. This critical program harnesses the purchasing power of the federal government to buy products and services from participating community-based nonprofit agencies that are dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. It affords Americans with disabilities the opportunity to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence and quality of life.

This segment of the population has suffered from significant unemployment. Federal opportunities through the AbilityOne Program have played an important role in bringing people with disabilities into the workforce. For example, one of Bosma Enterprises' employees Kevin Mossberger exemplifies how training and the AbilityOne Program can make a real difference in the life of someone. Kevin, who is in his early twenties obtained a degree in Business Management, but because of a genetic eye disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa was unable to find work in his small, southern Indiana hometown.

His parents suggested he go to Bosma Enterprises' Rehabilitation Center to receive additional training to live independently and to