

my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Baher Michel is a senior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country. Baher chose *Marbury v. Madison*.

The United States Supreme Court is often a spring of controversy. With *Marbury v. Madison* the Court has “judicial review”, power to deem any type of legislation as constitutional or unconstitutional, and thus, void. In other words, any government action or law can be challenged, brought in front of the Court, and whatever the Justices decide is final. The fact that it holds such enormous power in government but yet is comprised of a few unelected appointed Justices is perplexing. How can five, nine, or even ten individuals possibly reflect the American public opinion?

To claim that the Supreme Court is insular if not isolated of the real world would not be so outlandish of a claim. The fact that Justices are appointed and not elected by the general public is one indicator of a direct deviation from the public’s opinion. Another is the fact that Justices serve in the Supreme Court for life (unless they are convicted and impeached or they retire). Thus, while public society and opinion may and inevitably evolves, appointed Justices remain in power, succeeding to not reflect nor mirror the public’s changing opinion. Contenders might claim that such “insularity” is actually beneficial because the Supreme Court is not designed to reflect public opinion, but rather to merely interpret the Constitution. But then again, how can only nine people decide on what the Document meant as it relates to today’s cases?

While the Supreme Court does seem sovereign of public opinion, it is not completely secluded from it. A Justice appointee cannot make it to the Court unless voted on by the United States Senate, comprised of directly elected senators. So in essence, Justices should reflect public opinion not only because the elected President chooses them, but also because the Senate confirms them.

In conclusion, it may appear undemocratic and thus paradoxical that one of our most powerful branches in government is comprised of unelected officials. However, it must also be stated that such sovereignty actually shields Justices from faltering with the public’s ceaseless waves of ever-changing beliefs, emotions, and culture.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 116, had I been present, I would have voted “nay.”

A TRIBUTE TO THE McCLUER NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STARS, WINNERS OF THE MISSOURI CLASS 5 STATE TITLE FOR BASKETBALL AND STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Missouri’s own Class 5 State Basketball Champions, the McCluer North High School Stars.

McCluer North basketball and winning championships have become synonymous with one another, thanks to the tireless leadership of head coach Randy Reed and his group of determined and talented young men. High school students Alex Bluiett, Greg Brown, Galen Brown, Terrance Bush, Damon Clemons, Jacari Finley, Tremayne Garrett, Jordon Granger, Dorian Holland, Keith Jones, Mario McCoy, Bryon Ray, Zac Taylor, and Latron Thomas are now State champions.

The Stars’ run of excellence is unparalleled. In the past 6 years, McCluer North has won no fewer than 3 State championships and played for the State title 4 times, winning the State’s most daunting district tournament 6 of the past 7 years. This season alone, the Stars won 26 straight games, culminating in their heroic victory over their rivals, the Nixa Eagles. Their recent victory marks a fitting end to a season of hard work and perseverance. Their combination of athleticism, experience, depth, and talent proved to be more than their most challenging competitors could handle.

Mr. Speaker, Coach Reed and the men of the McCluer North Stars are true examples of sportsmanship and character, and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring their remarkable achievement.

HONORING CONTRA COSTA COUNTY DISTRICT 2 SUPERVISOR GAYLE UILKEMA

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate Contra Costa County District 2 Supervisor Gayle Uilkema as she retires after 37 years of public service.

Supervisor Uilkema began her long career in 1975 as a Lafayette Parks and Recreation Commissioner, and was soon elected to the Lafayette City Council. She served five subsequent terms on the City Council, where she left a strong legacy, after which she proudly served four terms as Mayor of Lafayette.

As the longest serving member of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, Gayle Uilkema has worked tirelessly on behalf of her constituents. Her knowledge and experience was integral in developing Lafayette’s Veterans Memorial Building and the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, two projects which provided access to resources previously unavailable to many in the community. She

was also instrumental in establishing the Lafayette Redevelopment Agency, which helped pass the first Road and Drain Bond in the area.

Gayle has accumulated numerous awards in the course of her career, including recognition from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the American Association of University Women. Gayle was named Alumna of the Year by California State University—East Bay and was honored as Co-Citizen of the Year by the West County Business & Professional Association. Most recently she was recognized as the 2012 Lafayette Citizen of the Year Award for her outstanding dedication and contributions to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in commending Supervisor Gayle Uilkema for her committed and diligent service to Lafayette and Contra Costa County. I am pleased to join her family, colleagues, and friends in congratulating her on an outstanding career and wish her the very best as she begins a well-deserved retirement.

HONORING TODD MATTHEW CALTON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Todd Matthew Calton. Todd is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 397, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Todd has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Todd has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned 53 merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Todd is a member of the Order of the Arrow and earned the rank of Tom-Tom Beater in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. Todd has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Todd built an outdoor volleyball court at Kearney Bible Church in Kearney, Missouri, a project that took Todd and his team of volunteers 340 hours to complete. Todd also plans on serve our country in the United States Marine Corps beginning in September 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Todd Matthew Calton for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I was unable to have my vote in the House recorded on H.R. 665 the Excess Federal Building and Property Disposal Act of 2011. If present, I would have voted “aye.”

Additionally, on final passage of H.R. 2087, legislation to remove restrictions from a parcel of land situated in the Atlantic District, Accomack County, Virginia, I would have voted "aye."

HONORING WALTER ALCORN, 2011
FAIRFAX COUNTY CITIZEN OF
THE YEAR

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Walter Alcorn, an exceptional constituent, on his receipt of the 2011 Fairfax County Citizen of the Year. Walter will receive this distinguished honor at the organization's 62nd Annual Awards Banquet on March 25, 2012. Walter has exhibited outstanding civic service and selfless volunteerism, and this honor is rightfully awarded.

Walter's recognition by the Fairfax County Citizens Association offers only a glimpse into his committed service to the residents of Northern Virginia. Most recently, Walter's involvement in Tyson's Corner helped a great deal in solving many of the complex planning issues.

As the Chair of the Planning Commission's Tysons Corner Committee, Walter led work to translate the vision and recommendations of the Tysons Corner Task Force into language appropriate for the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. For more than two years, Walter led the Committee and worked with all concerned stakeholders to develop consensus recommendations that were ultimately adopted by the Board of Supervisors in June 2010. In March of last year, the Board of Supervisors requested that the Planning Commission develop an all-encompassing method to address infrastructure financing, along with other Tysons-related implementation issues. Walter has diplomatically made sure that this has remained transparent throughout the entire process.

Walter's service goes back decades. He has served on the Fairfax County Planning Commission since 1997. He has chaired the Planning Commission's Tysons Corner Committee since 2008 and has served as its Vice Chairman since 1997. He was first by Board Chairman Kate Hanley, and reappointed 3 times on motions of Board Chairmen Gerry Connolly and Sharon Bulova. He also chaired the Planning Commission's Environment Committee from 1997 to 2006. Walter has been a Virginia Certified Planning Commissioner since December 1997.

Along with his service to the Fairfax County Planning Commission, he is an enthusiastic coach for Reston Little League, manager of the Reston Warriors 12U baseball team and serves on the steering committee of his Sunday School class at the United Christian Parish in Reston. When not volunteering, he is employed as the Vice President for Environmental Affairs and Industry Sustainability at the Consumer Electronics Association in Crystal City, where he commutes daily via the Fairfax Connector and Metro. Previously, he worked as an environmental consultant specializing in the development of a national system for recycling electronic equipment, co-

founded the 501(c)3 National Center for Electronics Recycling in 2005, and was a Deputy Division Manager in the Technology Research Group for Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). Prior to his private sector employment, Walter was a Policy Aide in the Providence District Supervisor's office.

Walter is a model of the best kind of civil servant. I'm proud to congratulate him on his well-deserved award, and give my sincere thanks for his unwavering service to Northern Virginia.

CONGRATULATING MILES
SAFFRAN, RECIPIENT OF THE
2012 PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF
COMMUNITY AWARD

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Miles Saffran for exemplary volunteer service in his community. Miles, age 15, of Winter Park, has been named one of the top honorees in Florida by The 2012 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state and the District of Columbia.

Miles is a sophomore at Trinity Preparatory School and has helped raise more than \$60,000 to fund three medical trips to Mexico where he has served as the surgical youth coordinator for cleft lip and palate repair for Florida Hospital's mission trips. While in Mexico, Miles was responsible for assisting surgeons, organizing medicine, cleaning masks, and comforting patients and their families.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Award was created in 1995 by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals to encourage youth volunteers in their contributions to society, to emphasize the value of volunteerism, and to inspire other young people to follow their example. Over the past 17 years, the program has become the nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, and has involved more than 100,000 young volunteers at the local, state and national level.

It is my pleasure to commend Miles for his energy and initiative in seeking to make his community and world a better place to live. His commitment and accomplishment is extraordinary in today's world and deserves recognition. His actions remind us that young Americans can play an important role in our communities.

On behalf of the citizens of Central Florida, I am pleased to recognize Miles Saffran's selflessness and enthusiasm for serving others and for making a difference. The kind of altruism evident in Miles's efforts represents our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow. May his efforts inspire others to follow in his footsteps.

"STARS AND STRIPES: NO PROBLEMS WITH 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL' REPEAL"

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, whenever a legislative body deals with measures to prohibit or lessen discrimination against any group, opponents who do not wish to affirm that they are prejudiced against that group often assert that there will be negative consequences if the antidiscrimination measure is adopted. Most recently, we heard dire predictions from many supporters of the policy of discriminating against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of the military that allowing these patriotic Americans to serve their country openly would be terribly disruptive. Apparently, there were many who believed that young Americans who serve in the military shared their prejudice.

Despite their arguments, the repeal was voted by the Congress in 2010 and very efficiently put into place by Defense Secretary Panetta after full consultation with the Military Chiefs of Staff. It has now been about six months since the ban on honesty among gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender military personnel was dropped. And, as in many other cases—for example our laws protecting people with disabilities, or our laws banning discrimination against women—the predictions of social chaos from opponents of fairness have proven to be baseless.

Stars and Stripes, the widely regarded newspaper that serves our military, and has a long record of independence and integrity, summed it up in an article on March 19th as follows: "Six months after the military ended the controversial "don't ask, don't tell" law barring gays from serving openly, Pentagon officials and gay rights advocates say the policy change has largely been a non-issue, with few complaints and no major headaches resulting from the new rules."

It is true that there are some of those who were opposed to this end to a discriminatory policy who continue to argue that there would have been problems if the Pentagon had not somehow mysteriously suppressed it. The notion that there is any significant degree of dissatisfaction but there is no way that anyone has been able to voice it—even anonymously—is of course highly suspect. The fact is that it turns out that the young people in the military do not share the prejudices of some of their would-be defenders, and the notion that military effectiveness has in any way been damaged, or that we would see people leaving the military, have been shown to have no basis.

Mr. Speaker, because it is important to have this further example of the inaccuracy of the predictions that are made when we seek to ban discrimination against particular groups, and because this was such an important issue debated in this Congress, I ask that the article from Stars and Stripes be printed here.

[From the Stars and Stripes, Mar. 19, 2012]

(By Leo Shane III)

SIX MONTHS AFTER REPEAL, MILITARY SAYS
DADT DIED QUIETLY

WASHINGTON.—Sgt. Pepe Johnson was surprised by the reaction he received when his fellow soldiers learned that he is gay.