

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.”