

family support groups, counseling, and community outreach and education. Not only does she continue to help aid families, but she successfully advocates for legislation to protect victims' rights.

Ms. Hawkins is a force to be reckoned with and a true champion for crime victims.

Suzanne Beaudoin is another bold woman who dedicated her life to serving crime victims. She was nominated for the Ed Stout Memorial Award by one of our newest VRC Members, Congressman MARK POCAN from Wisconsin. Like Ed Stout, Ms. Beaudoin has seen her work directly benefit survivors of crime.

Suzanne Beaudoin currently serves on the Wisconsin Crime Victims Council and has been the Director of the Victim Witness Unit of the Dane County District Attorney's Office for 20 years.

Throughout her years working in the Victim Witness Unit, she established ground-breaking programs in her community and advocated for critical victim legislation, including Wisconsin Victim's Rights Constitutional Amendment and the establishment of a local children's advocacy center. We are thankful for Ms. Beaudoin and those like her who guide victims through the criminal justice system and address the needs of survivors.

The work of these determined individuals never ceases to amaze me.

America is the greatest country in the world because of people like these.

And that's just the way it is.

SAMANTHA BENNETT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Samantha Bennett for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Samantha Bennett is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Samantha Bennett is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Samantha Bennett for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 20, 2013, I was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on rollcall No. 161, "yea;" on rollcall No. 162, "yea;" on rollcall No. 163, "yea."

CONGRATULATING DR. DAVID J. VERDUGO, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE PARAMOUNT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dr. David J. Verdugo on his retirement after forty years as an educator. For the last eight years, Dr. Verdugo has served as the superintendent of the 16,000 student Paramount Unified School District. He will retire in June at the end of the current school year.

Before coming to the Paramount Unified School District, Superintendent Verdugo served at three uniquely different school districts: Spokane Public School District in the state of Washington, El Rancho Unified School District in Pico Rivera, California, and Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, also in California. Dr. Verdugo has been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal, working with children grades K–12. He has also served as an assistant superintendent, where his responsibilities included school facility management, extensive involvement with budget development, implementation of technology programs, employer/employee relations, curriculum and instructional strategies and organizational development.

He is highly respected throughout the school district, the community and the education field. Dr. Verdugo is known for his strategic approach to major decisions, his communication with all stakeholders and his efforts to build a culture where individuals care about each other, resulting in a dramatic difference for students. His communications and work at Paramount Unified during the State's budget crisis resulted in everyone coming together so they could continue their efforts to benefit children, families and employees.

Dr. Verdugo has established a reputation as a leader focused on student learning and achievement. He possesses those critical skills essential to understanding and meeting the needs of students, staff, and parents. He is committed to excellence and believes that all students should be provided the highest quality of education in a safe and secure environment.

With experience serving students of diverse populations and socioeconomic levels in urban and suburban settings, Dr. Verdugo is a staunch supporter of strategic planning and believes strongly that it is essential to the success of any progressive school district.

As Superintendent, Dr. Verdugo has been instrumental in leading many of the school district's significant accomplishments, including dramatically increasing college and career pathways for students, fostering a resurgence of the arts, building new and transforming existing school facilities, and most importantly, raising the level of academic achievement of students to an all-time high.

Dr. Verdugo received his B.A. from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington; his M.A. from La Verne University; and his Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Southern California. He was recognized as the 2008 ACSA Region 14 Superintendent of the Year. He also received the

California State University of Long Beach Superintendent Leadership Award for 2012 and was selected as a National Governing Board Member for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). He currently serves as President of the highly respected Southern California Superintendents' Association.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking and congratulating Dr. David J. Verdugo for his many years of outstanding service to our community and our young people, and wish him many happy years of retirement.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF BAHAI LEADERS IN IRAN

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, this month we mark the fifth anniversary of a terrible abuse of human rights in Iran.

Seven Baha'i leaders in Iran have been in prison for five years as of May 14, 2013. They are Mahvash Sabet, Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Vahid Tizfahm.

Tragically, there are many prisoners of conscience filling Iran's jails. Our Department of State's annual Human Rights Report documents case after case of violations of religious freedom. Indeed, in Iran, a climate of hostility surrounds all non-Shia religious communities. The Baha'i as well as Sunni Muslims, evangelical Christians, and Jews are victims of discrimination and persecution.

For all the victims of this persecution, and in particular for the seven Baha'i whose grim milestone we mark this month, it is critical that we raise our voices to send a message that they are not forgotten.

These seven leaders are all members of a national-level group—the "Yaran-i-Iran" or "Friends in Iran"—which oversaw the welfare of Iran's Baha'i community. Their 20-year prison term is the longest sentence of any current prisoners of conscience in Iran.

The seven were charged with espionage, propaganda against the Islamic republic, the establishment of an illegal administration, and corruption on earth. These are typical of the false charges and misinformation used to vilify Baha'is in Iran. The defendants rejected these charges completely and categorically. Their crime is being members of the Baha'i Faith, a religion which has been the focus of systematic, government-sponsored persecution in Iran since the 1979 revolution.

The trial of the seven leaders was also the trial of an entire community of more than 300,000. For the last 30 years, more than 200 Baha'is have been killed, hundreds more imprisoned, and thousands deprived of jobs, education, and the freedom to worship.

In an act of communal self-preservation, the Baha'is created an internal university called the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education to educate those denied entry to university. It was raided in 2011 and seven educators and administrators were sentenced to four or five years' imprisonment.