

Our club also holds mock interview sessions with local community college students. The "Show Me the Money" project pairs up Rotarians with students in a positive, affirming environment. Our sessions include making the right first impression and financial literacy.

There are truly too many service projects this Club has completed over the past forty years to share them all, but a conservative estimate is that Rotarians from The Woodlands Club have put in tens of thousands of service hours.

So, to my fellow Rotarians I thank you for 40 years of living the Rotary motto of "Service before Self" in thought, word, and most importantly, in deeds. May your exemplary servant leadership continue to bless our community.

I know my Rotarian pride shines through when I share what my home Rotary club does for our community. Today I want all of America to join with us in celebrating 40 great years. I can't wait to see what the future holds for The Rotary Club of The Woodlands.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 29, 2015*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2028) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes:

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague and friend, Mr. BEYER, for his leadership on this issue.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle are once again attempting to substitute Congress' will outside its purview, this time by prohibiting the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA from finalizing their Waters of the U.S. rule.

This is nothing new.

Earlier this year they tried to get into the local permitting process by forcing states to accept the Keystone XL pipeline. As a former local government official you can imagine how shocked I was at that effort.

And let us not forget how often they seek to tell the District of Columbia, and its residents, how they should be governed.

Now, my friends wish to halt federal rule-making prescribed under the Clean Water Act, almost a decade in the making and after more than a million public comments and numerous public hearings and stakeholder meetings, just before a final rule is released.

Remember, it was Congress and the Supreme Court who asked for clarification for what should be defined as "navigable waters."

Today, nearly 60 percent of our nation's streams and millions of acres of wetlands currently lack clear protection from pollution under the Clean Water Act. Current loopholes put at risk 2 million miles of our streams, threatening the drinking water of 117 million Americans, and jeopardizing 20 million acres of wetlands.

The proposed rule would provide an estimated \$388 million to \$514 million annually of

benefits to the public, including reducing flooding, filtering pollution, providing wildlife habitat, supporting hunting and fishing, and recharging groundwater. The public benefits significantly outweigh the costs for mitigating impacts to streams and wetlands, and taking steps to reduce pollution to our waterways.

Why don't we let the rulemaking process finish and then we can see if it needs to be fixed. The Beyer-Connolly amendment will do that. But let's not jump to judgement.

Congress has a role to play. But it shouldn't be as an intransigent obstacle.

HONORING GUILFORD NATIVE NICK FRADIANI, JR., AMERICAN IDOL SEASON XIV FINALIST

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 1, 2015*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to join the community of Guilford, Connecticut, as well as the Fradiani family, friends, and fans of all ages in extending my heartfelt congratulations to Connecticut's own Nick Fradiani, Jr. who this week became a finalist on Season XIV of the reality television series American Idol.

With his musician father, Nick Fradiani, Sr., bringing him to gigs as a child and blessed with a special talent all his own it is not hard to believe that Nick developed a passion for music. Though he has really only focused on music as a career over the last decade, it is that passion that makes Nick's performances so special and why he has been able to build such a strong fan base in Connecticut.

A performer, singer, and songwriter, he has taken American Idol Season XIV by storm and, in the process, has sparked a unique enthusiasm across his home state of Connecticut. Bringing his own style to fan favorites like Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' "American Girl," Billy Joel's "Only the Good Die Young," Maroon 5's "Harder To Breathe," Rod Stewart's "Maggie May," Matchbox Twenty's "Bright Lights," and Rascal Flatts "What Hurts the Most" he has impressed American Idol judges and, more importantly, won the hearts and minds of millions across the country who have voted to ensure his continued appearances.

Nick has created quite the fervor in Connecticut—reflected in the thousands of fans across the state who crowd into viewing parties or watch from each week to see him perform and vote for him to advance. I am honored to have this opportunity to join his parents Nick and Liz, along with his sister, Kristen, his extended family, friends and the Guilford community in wishing Nick Fradiani, Jr. the best of luck in the last weeks of the American Idol competition.

Nick—win or lose you have made us all proud and we are with you.

HONORING ESCALADE SPORTS

**HON. LARRY BUCSHON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 1, 2015*

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Escalade Sports, a fantastic Hoosier business in my home district.

Escalade Sports is being awarded the President's "E" Award, the highest recognition a U.S. Company can receive for significantly contributing to the expansion of U.S. exports.

This award was created in 1961 to provide recognition of the work that America's exporters undertake, and honors 45 companies every year for their contributions to the American economy.

Escalade Sports embodies the spirit of this award as it produces many high quality American sporting and gaming products that range from basketball hoops, to table tennis equipment, to archery supplies. These products are then exported and sold to athletes and sports enthusiasts across the globe to enjoy and use.

Escalade Sports is headquartered in Evansville, where it provides quality jobs to Hoosiers here in Southwest Indiana and many more across the United States in its various production and distribution facilities. The company's exports not only help show the world what amazing products are made here in America, but also keep Americans employed and help expand our economy.

Mr. Speaker, we should all be grateful for the fine work of Escalade Sports, and the other "E" Award recipients across the United States for their contributions to the American economy.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. MARK P. THOMAS FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE SCHUYLKILL CHORAL SOCIETY

**HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 1, 2015*

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Mark P. Thomas, who will be honored for his service to the Schuylkill Choral Society on May 9. Dr. Thomas has served as the music director and conductor of the Schuylkill Choral Society for three decades.

Under his leadership, the Schuylkill County Choral Society has gained worldwide recognition. Dr. Thomas has been recognized in the United States and Europe for his contribution to the performing arts. In addition to his duties with the Choral Society, Dr. Thomas is a founder of both the Anthracite Philharmonic and Schuylkill County's first children's chorus, Minor Notes Chorale.

Dr. Thomas has been a guest artist and conductor for many organizations including the Prague Radio Symphony, the New York Pops, and the Schuylkill Symphony Orchestra. He has made multiple tours throughout Europe and North America which have included multiple performances at Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center and the Riverside Cathedral in New York, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, the State Opera House and the Cathedral of St.

Mary and Paul in Prague, and the Cathedral of St. Stephen in Vienna. Thomas has served as a guest conductor with the Ocean Grove Choral Festival Choir, at Reading's Music-fest, and for PMEA choral festivals throughout Pennsylvania. He has also toured and conducted in Russia, Finland, and Estonia with members of the State Orchestra of St. Petersburg and members of the Eastern Pennsylvania Choral Society. In 2016, he will be leading the Schuylkill Choral Society on a tour to Italy and France which will include performances in Rome, Florence, Paris, and Normandy. Dr. Thomas has appeared nationally on the NPR and PBS as well as local appearances on Comcast Tonight and Comcast Newsmakers. He has served as a music consultant for Maryland Educational Television and as an adjunct professor at Alvernia University, Penn State University, and Bucks County Community College. Thomas and his choirs are also featured performers of the Na-

tional Anthem for the Philadelphia sports community, including regular performances for the Phillies, Sixers, and Flyers.

Dr. Thomas is deservedly listed in the *Who's Who in the World*, *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in Education*, and *Who's Who among American Teachers*. He has received recognition from former President Bill Clinton on behalf of a music program he designed honoring World War II veterans. He has also received recognition from the U.S. House of Representatives, the Pennsylvania House and Senate, the Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners, and the Austrian and German governments. Thomas was named by Philadelphia Magazine as "Best Choral Director" in the Philadelphia region. He has also been recognized by the St. David's Society as a "Citizen of the Year," was Pennsylvania finalist for "Teacher of the Year," and was the first musician inducted into the Upper Perkiomen Valley Academic Hall of Fame.

It is an honor to recognize Dr. Mark Thomas for his work in the musical arts. His passion for music is evident his impressive body of work, which has touched countless individuals over the years. I applaud him for his service to the greater artistic good, and I wish him continued success in the future.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 1, 2015*

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I regrettably missed votes on Wednesday, April 29. Had I been present, I would have voted "No" on Roll Call 176, "Yes" on Roll Call 177, and "No" on Roll Call vote 178.