

Forces Qualification Course. This was quickly followed by an assignment as the Director of Special Operations Proponency at the United States Special Operation Command in Tampa, Florida.

Since his arrival to the "Red Empire," 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in 2009, Colonel Kirila has called North Florida home. Here he initially served as a Battalion Commander and deployed to Afghanistan as the Deputy Commander of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan. We are happy to hear he intends to remain as a permanent member of our community upon his retirement and we proudly welcome him.

Colonel Kirila's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious service Medal with two Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. He has also earned the Special Forces Tab, the Ranger Tab, the Expert Infantryman's Badge, the Senior Parachutist Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, the Air Assault Badge, and the Combat Infantry Badge. His foreign awards include the El Salvadoran Parachutist Badge, the German Basic Parachutist Badge (Bronze) and the Canadian Parachutist Badge.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Colonel Robert M. Kirila, US Army, is retiring with an honorable career on which he can proudly hang his Green Beret. He has touched a number of lives throughout his time both in and out of the military and has given so much back to the country he loves so dear. It is my pleasure to join a grateful Northwest Florida community and Nation in saluting his lifetime of service. My wife, Vicki, and I thank Colonel Kirila; his wife, Chrissie; and daughters, Mia and Lily Agnes; and wish them all the best for continued success.

RECOGNIZING LASALLE-BACKUS
EDUCATION CAMPUS'S COMMIT-
MENT TO STEM EDUCATION

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the students, parents, and faculty of Lasalle-Backus Education Campus for their commitment to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics enrichment, and for participating in my annual Science and Technology Braintrust.

The teachers at Lasalle-Backus Education Campus are committed to ensuring that our country's youth is exposed to a STEM curriculum, which is paramount to the future of our country. A prevalent theme amongst successful STEM professionals is the curiosity and drive instilled by their teachers at a young age. We must continue to invest in schools that highlight a STEM education, so that all students will have an opportunity to one day be an astrophysicist, doctor, engineer, or a geologist.

Mr. Speaker, Lasalle-Backus Education Campus is a true advocate of STEM education and deserves recognition for its work. With great pride I can say that because of this school's commitment to STEM education, our

country's youth is gaining the skills needed to compete in a rapidly globalizing world.

TRIBUTE TO BOB CRITTENDEN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bob Crittenden, of Afton, Iowa for being selected as Union County's 2016 inductee into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame.

Bob Crittenden is a lifetime resident of Union County. He has been involved with 4-H since becoming a member of the Royal Rustlers 4-H club in 1949 and a volunteer with the organization for 40 years. Bob showed market beef at the Union County Fair and the Iowa State Fair. Since then, he has helped with the beef projects as a mentor to the youth. He also has helped with the weighing, the show ring, and volunteered his talents as an auctioneer on many occasions.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by Bob Crittenden demonstrates the rewards of harnessing one's talents and sharing them with the world. His efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent Bob Crittenden and many Iowans like him in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating Bob Crittenden for his achievements and wish him nothing but continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Tuesday, September 20, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on roll call votes 521, 522 and 523.

PEARLAND'S KRISHNAKUMAR
HEADS BACK TO SCRIPPS NA-
TIONAL SPELLING BEE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Pearland, Texas student Siddharth Krishnakumar for becoming co-champion of the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee—the second largest local bee in the U.S. His accomplishment means a repeat trip to the Scripps National Spelling Bee, where he previously took 4th place in the nation.

Siddharth, an eighth-grader at Pearland Junior High West, won his Spelling Bee title by correctly spelling the word "ineffable." He advances to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in February. We are very proud of Siddharth and wish him luck on the national stage.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again

to Siddharth for becoming co-champion of the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee. Keep up the great work.

COMMEMORATING THE PASSING
OF CHARLES Z. SMITH

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to my friend Justice Charles Z. Smith, of Seattle, Washington, who passed away at the age of 89 on Sunday, August 28, 2016. Charles was the first African American state trial judge and Supreme Court justice of Washington State. He was a role model to many, and leaves a trailblazing legacy of social justice and public service.

Charles Zellender Smith was born in Florida in 1927 to an African-American mother who was the daughter of slaves and a Cuban immigrant father. After serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, he attended Temple University and graduated in 1952. Charles moved to Seattle and was accepted to the University of Washington Law School. Out of a class of 120, he was the only student of color to graduate in 1955.

His career was a series of firsts: unable to find a law firm to hire him after he graduated, he became the first African-American law clerk for a state Supreme Court justice. In 1965, he became the first African-American to serve as a Seattle municipal court judge, and in 1966, he was the first person of color named to the King County Superior Court bench.

He stepped down to become a professor and associate dean of law at the University of Washington, during which he began a long fight for reparations for Japanese Americans interned in camps during World War II. Later, in private practice, he urged the Seattle City Council to declare the city a "sanctuary city" for refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador.

In 1988, Gov. Booth Gardner appointed Smith to the State Supreme Court and he served until his retirement in 2002. He was known as a thoughtful judge with a reputation for fairness and often was the swing vote in split decisions. From the bench, he spoke eloquently, without notes, and often advocated for immigrant rights and innovative criminal rehabilitation methods.

As well as serving on the Washington State Supreme Court, Justice Smith was a television commentator and president of the American Baptist Churches. In 1999, while still on the Court, President Bill Clinton appointed him to serve on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, where he helped develop policies promoting religious freedom and ending the civil war in Sudan.

Mr. Speaker, Justice Smith worked tirelessly for over five decades as an advocate for truth, justice and freedom. He broke down barriers and forged a path for generations to follow. He will be greatly missed.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SARAH HUBBARD FOR BEING AWARDED THE FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Walnut Shade, Missouri resident Sarah Hubbard for being awarded the Fulbright Scholarship by the U.S. State Department.

The Fulbright Scholarship program was established by Congress in 1946 and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. This scholarship was designed to build positive relationships with other countries while allowing recipients to live the day-to-day experiences of other cultures. Sarah Hubbard will join the already 370,000 past participants in this program.

This scholarship is a merit based scholarship that is highly competitive. Founded originally by Senator J. William Fulbright, this grant aims to have educational research and teachings extend beyond the United States.

Sarah Hubbard, who attended John Brown University, will be an English Teaching Assistant and placed in Turkey. She has presented at research conferences since her freshman year and is the first student in John Brown University history to receive the award.

I am honored to recognize Sarah Hubbard, and I congratulate her on receiving the Fulbright Scholarship.

HONORING REAR ADMIRAL JEFFREY TRUSSLER FOR HIS SERVICE AS COMMANDER OF THE UNDERSEA WARFIGHTING DEVELOPMENT CENTER

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and congratulate Rear Admiral Jeffrey Trussler on the day of his change of command ceremony for his service as the Commander of the Undersea Warfighting Development Center in Groton, Connecticut. RDML Trussler led the UWDC during a momentous time in Connecticut's history. For the past year, the Groton community has been celebrating the centennial anniversary of Naval Submarine Base New London, the nation's first continental sub base. It has been a joyous and proud time for the Base and the region, as they honor a rich maritime military heritage and the many accomplishments the sailors and the local industry have achieved.

RDML Trussler has been an integral part of this progress during his time in Groton, and a crucial partner during the early planning stages of UWDC. I personally appreciate his active engagement and his ability to see the possibilities for this new warfighting center. As the first Commander of the newly formed UWDC, he took charge as the Navy refocused our warfare centers for our current and future warfighting needs. With his leadership, he focused on antisubmarine warfare and warfighting strategy and training for our entire Naval fleet. His leadership no doubt enhanced

the strategic value of Submarine Base New London, solidifying it as a center of excellence entering the next 100 years.

RDML Trussler came to New London from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, DC. After he leaves New London, he will return to Washington to serve again in the office of the CNO as the Director of Future Plans. I look forward to continue working with RDML Trussler in this new role. Most of all, I thank him for his excellent leadership in Groton, and for his service to our country, our Navy, and the future of undersea warfare.

LETTER FROM CONGRESSIONAL ARMENIAN ISSUES CAUCUS ON ARMENIA'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Armenia on their 25th anniversary of independence. I include in the RECORD a letter to the President of the Republic of Armenia from the leaders of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues in celebration of this occasion.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2016.

His Excellency SERZH SARGSYAN,

President of the Republic of Armenia.

DEAR PRESIDENT SARGSYAN: As Members of Congress and leaders of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, we congratulate you and the people of the Republic of Armenia on 25 years of independence from the Soviet Union. On this day, 25 years ago, nearly every Armenian eligible to vote pledged to build a free and proud nation, based on the principles of democracy and a market economy.

In the past quarter century, despite the ongoing blockade of Armenia by two of its four neighbors, the Republic of Armenia has continued to strengthen its democratic institutions, empower civil society, and engage in economic diversification.

Armenia has joined the international community as a member of numerous international organizations including the World Bank, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the World Trade Organization. As a critical regional ally, Armenia is also a strong partner and supporter of U.S.-led peace-keeping missions cooperating on a number of regional and security challenges as a participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

The Republic of Armenia has also consistently championed the right to self-determination of its neighbors in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, a right that Artsakh continues to fight for in its steadfast pursuit of regional security and stability despite a tenuous cease fire.

The Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues stands in solidarity with the peace-loving and resilient people of Armenia. We welcome future opportunities to work closely with the leadership of the Republic of Armenia to bolster the bilateral U.S.-Armenia relationship.

We join our colleagues in Congress, along with the Armenian people and the Armenian-American community across the United States in celebrating 25 years of Armenia's independence. Please accept our best wishes and continued commitment to a strong United States-Armenia partnership.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, JR.

ROBERT J. DOLD.
JACKIE SPEIER.
DAVID G. VALADAO.
ADAM B. SCHIFF.
DAVID A. TROTT.

TRIBUTE TO ANNA LINKEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ms. Anna Linkey on the occasion of her 100th birthday on September 4, 2016.

Our world has changed immensely during the course of Anna's life. Since her birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Anna has lived through seventeen United States Presidents and twenty-four Governors of Iowa. In her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Anna Linkey in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish her a very happy 100th birthday. I invite my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Anna on reaching this incredible milestone, and wishing her even more health and happiness in the years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROSEMARIE HUDOCK-WELCH

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Colonel Rosemarie Hudock-Welch, who will be retiring from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard after three decades of service. Over the course of her career she has earned multiple awards and decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Force Achievement Medal.

Lieutenant Colonel Hudock-Welch was commissioned to the Air Force Reserve on September 17, 1984. She was assigned to Joint Base McGuire as a flight nurse until 1990. She went on to serve with the 913th Medical Squadron at Willow Grove. As a surgical nurse, Lieutenant Colonel Hudock-Welch was deployed in direct medical support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In July 2007, Lieutenant Colonel Hudock-Welch was transferred to the 109th Medical New York Air National Guard in Schenectady, NY. During this time, she deployed to Antarctica as part of Operation Deep Freeze. In March 2010, Lieutenant Colonel Hudock-Welch was transferred to 193rd Medical Group and deployed to Afghanistan for direct medical support.

In May 2014, Lieutenant Colonel Hudock-Welch became Officer in Charge of Nursing Services, 193rd Medical Group Pennsylvania Air National Guard. Under her leadership, nursing services personnel were prepared to