

freedom in Turkey, a longtime friend and ally of the United States.

The value we in America place on freedom of religion goes to the very heart of American democracy, and we have a strong interest in promoting religious freedom globally. As with other indicators of democracy and human rights, nations that respect religious tolerance generally enjoy greater economic prosperity and social stability. While I support this resolution and encourage further progress on religious freedom in Turkey, I also believe we must seek to support these standards in an even-handed manner.

I would like to emphasize the importance of U.S.-Turkish relations. From Turkey's critical support in Afghanistan and elsewhere, as a uniquely positioned NATO ally and their substantial humanitarian contributions in response to famine in the Horn of Africa to Turkey's efforts in support of the Syrian people as the Assad regime's brutality intensifies, Turkey continues to be a strong partner in addressing some of the world's most vexing problems. As revolutionary calls for democratic governance sound throughout the Middle East and North Africa, we must continue to work closely with Turkey, whose position as a democratic, majority Muslim country can play a positive role in transitions in the region.

Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the positive steps that the Turkish government has taken to address issues of religious freedom and tolerance. This August, the Turkish government issued a decree inviting non-Muslims to reclaim churches and synagogues that were confiscated 75 years ago and has eased some citizenship requirements on Orthodox clergy. Unfortunately, H. Res. 306 omits recognition of these important commitments. While issues remain, particularly with regard to the Ecumenical Patriarch, I am encouraged by the efforts that have been made and hope for further progress.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Turkey and Turkish Americans, I look forward to the ongoing alliance between our countries.

IN RECOGNITION OF FRISCO FIRE CHIEF MACK BORCHARDT

**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 15, 2011*

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Fire Chief Mack Borchardt for his dedicated service to the Frisco Fire Department and to the people of the 26th Congressional District of Texas.

Chief Borchardt first became a volunteer Frisco firefighter in 1973; at that time, Frisco had an all-volunteer fire department. In November 1987, Chief Borchardt became Frisco's first fulltime fire chief. Through his leadership, diligence, and organization, the Frisco Fire Department now has more than 140 fulltime department members.

Under Chief Borchardt's leadership, the Frisco Fire Department has expanded to become an outstanding example to departments nationwide. They are one of the select few departments in the country that have an ISO 1 rating, which is a testament to their superior standards and procedures. The Frisco Town

Council recognized Chief Borchardt with a resolution proclaiming December 2011 as Aubrey "Mack" Borchardt Month in Frisco. His service to his community, society, and peers throughout the past 30 years is indeed an inspiration.

I am honored to represent the city of Frisco and many of its residents in the United States Congress. I, along with his family, friends, and the citizens of the 26th District celebrate his tireless commitment to his community. Please join me in recognizing and thanking this exceptional community leader for his selfless commitment to our society.

CONGRATULATING VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, RECIPIENT OF THE 2011 ASPEN PRIZE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE

**HON. DANIEL WEBSTER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 15, 2011*

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate Valencia Community College on earning the inaugural Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence recognizes extraordinary accomplishments in community colleges, applauding those that serve as models for elevating community college education.

Valencia Community College was selected by the Aspen Institute after a competitive, year-long process during which 120 of the nation's top community colleges were judged based on student performance and graduation rates. Of Valencia Community College's full time students, more than half graduate or transfer within three years. This is well above the national average of 40%.

Founded in 1967 as Valencia Junior College, Valencia Community College's goal was to make its students successful, both in the classroom and in their personal and professional lives. Today, Valencia Community College is the third largest community college in Florida, educating more than 50,000 students each year.

This is not the first time Valencia has been recognized for excellence in education. Indeed, Valencia has a long history of national distinction. Valencia was recognized in 2009, with the inaugural Leah Meyer Austin Institutional Student Success Leadership Award; in 2007, by the New York Times as a leading community college; in 2001, by TIME Magazine as one of the nation's best schools at helping first-year students to excel; and in 1998, the National Alliance of Business named Valencia the Community College of the Year.

On behalf of the citizens of the State of Florida, I am pleased to congratulate Valencia Community College's President, Dr. Sanford Shugart, and Valencia Community College's Administration, Board of Trustees, and faculty for pursuing excellence in community college education, both nationally and as a critical part of Florida's education system. May their hard work and dedication inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

TO HONOR PFC BRENDAN MARROCCO, UNITED STATES ARMY, WITH A POEM: "STATEN ISLAND STEEL"

**HON. MICHAEL G. GRIMM**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 15, 2011*

Mr. GRIMM.

STATEN ISLAND STEEL

All in the shadow of liberty . . .  
 All in this most Gotham of all cities . . .  
 There grew up to be, one of our nation's finest sons so indeed . . .  
 As strong, as strong . . . as strong as can be!  
 Army Strong that's who he!  
 Whose heart and soul, makes our Lord so complete . . .  
 Whose courage so makes even the Angels up on high so weep!  
 Because . . .  
 Some Steel, cannot so be crushed!  
 Some Steel, will not so rust!  
 Some Steel, cannot so be bent!  
 Some Steel . . . cannot so be broken!  
 As if this Steel was Heaven sent!  
 All in how, his heart of Steel has so spoken . . .  
 So very deep down inside, all in what Rocco is invoking . . .  
 That which so brings such tears to eyes . . .  
 Which against all odds somehow kept hope alive!  
 To So Teach Us . . . To So Reach Us . . . To So Beseech Us!  
 Because, The Greatest Steel In This World . . .  
 Comes from Staten Island, my little boys and girls . . .  
 Yea, The Stronger than anything known to man!  
 Staten Island Steel . . .  
 Move over Superman, you're just a comic book . . . Rocco is real!  
 And Batman this is not your city anymore!  
 Brendan Marrocco, "Rocco" . . . Aka . . . Staten Island Steel!  
 Because, Rocco you have the word hero stamped all across your chest!  
 As you Rocco put the B . . . In Be The Best!  
 All found in your heart of gold, and your life's quest . . .  
 For Army Strong is your life's song!  
 Brendan, You Rock . . . all night long . . .  
 And when we gaze upon his heart, we feel the burn!  
 And now more Steel has so been forged!  
 The Bear! PFC Bryan Dilberian a 10th Mountain Man . . .  
 A Brooklyn Man, a Real Beastie Boy who stands!  
 A question asked, "in New York, what are you putting in that water man?"  
 This Christmas and Hanukkah, remember all of those men and women . . .  
 Who upon them this our Nation do so depend . . .  
 Who with hearts of Steel, all for us so live and die . . .  
 As across this nation families cry . . .  
 Separated by death and distance, who this holiday season so miss this . . .  
 And men like Rocco, who with hearts of Steel . . .  
 Who to all of us so reveal!  
 That word Hero, Brendan Marrocco . . .  
 Staten Island Steel!