

RECOGNIZING GRADUATING SENIOR BUFFALO STATE BENGALS BASKETBALL PLAYERS, CHRIS CASTREN AND JUSTIN MITCHELL

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2014*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two members of the senior class at Buffalo State College, Chris Castren and Justin Mitchell. Both students are members of the men's varsity basketball team at Buffalo State and will graduate this spring. I commend Chris and Justin for their dedication to academics and athletics and congratulate them at the culmination of their college careers.

Chris Castren hails from Voorheesville, New York, where he attended the regional public high school. Upon graduation, Chris will have earned a degree in Elementary Education. On the basketball team, he excelled playing guard.

Justin Mitchell is a native of Buffalo, and graduated from Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School in South Buffalo, New York. At Buffalo State, he pursued a degree in Sociology and held the position of forward on the team.

Participating in collegiate athletics while enrolled as a full time student is notoriously demanding. In spite of the unique challenges faced by student athletes, Chris and Justin have excelled during their time at Buffalo State. They have shown extreme discipline in balancing both commitments and are leaders to their peers and teammates. As an alumnus of Buffalo State, I will be proud to call them fellow alumni.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing my colleagues to join me in recognizing these exceptional Buffalo State Bengals and in congratulating them as they obtain their undergraduate degrees. Their work ethic, determination, and spirit will ensure their success, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

**PUBLIC ACCESS AND LANDS IMPROVEMENT ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 6, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2954) to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2954, the so-called "Public Access and Lands Improvement Act." While there are some provisions in this bill that I think many of us could support, most of its titles include unacceptable waivers of environmental law and giveaways to private interests.

The bill bypasses carefully balanced processes for transferring federal lands while protecting access and value for taxpayers, reverses a scientifically-based land management

decision, and waives environmental protections and local consultation for certain land for timber harvests and grazing.

As with many of the bills we've seen on the Floor this week, H.R. 2954 makes sweeping and unnecessary changes to existing law that disrupt the balance necessary to manage our public lands in the best interest of American taxpayers. By waiving scientific review and local consultation, this cobbled-together omnibus makes ill-considered decisions about the future of public resources. I urge a no vote.

**A TRIBUTE TO HANNAH BLYTH AND THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2014*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, for decades the United States has worked closely with Australia on issues of great importance to our two nations. Australia has stood stalwartly as a friend of the United States and remains one of our closest allies today. Last year I worked with the Department of Commerce to organize a trade mission of Connecticut companies to Australia. As part of the trip planning, I was pleased to work closely with Australia's Ambassador to the United States, Kim Beazley, who joined me on a visit to Connecticut last spring. As Australia and the United States increase export and defense collaboration in the coming years, we must continue to strengthen our bilateral relationship with Australia.

Fifteen years ago, a program launched to place Australian students in offices in our Nation's Capital. Since that time, the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program has delivered to the United States some of Australia's best and brightest to serve as interns in a variety of federal agencies, congressional offices, and committees.

During my first term in Congress, I was privileged to welcome Anthony Bremmer to my office, and since then my office has hosted Jehane Sharah and Niall O'Shea. When the opportunity arose again to participate in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, I immediately agreed to welcome another Australian "ambassador." Once again, my office and I have been pleased with the positive contributions of Hannah Blyth, who was placed in our office. She has attended meetings and briefings, assisted my staff with various research initiatives, and helped serve my constituents of the Second District of Connecticut. Prior to coming to the United States, Hannah worked for the Parliament of New South Wales as a Policy and Project Officer. With an avid interest in American politics and international relations, Hannah hopes to grow her experience and knowledge of the American political landscape during her time in my office. Hannah is truly an exceptional ambassador for the people of Australia.

Hannah's participation in this program has provided her with new opportunities and experiences that only the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program could provide. While in the program Hannah has attended events at the Australian Embassy, met with State Department and USAID officials, and toured the United Nations headquarters in New York with

the Australian Mission to the U.N. A well-rounded graduate student, Hannah will be receiving a Master's degree in U.S. Studies from the University of Sydney's United States Studies Centre when she graduates later this year.

Many of my colleagues have also been privileged to welcome students like Hannah to their offices. This year, 14 students from 10 Australian universities all across Australia are serving in offices in Washington, helping foster a new generation of understanding and shared experiences between our two nations. Launched by former Congressional staffer Eric Federling, the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship program has now delivered 156 Australian student interns over the past 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all of my colleagues to open their doors to students from around the world so that they can share in our great democracy. Similarly, I would encourage American university students to seek established and creative ways to connect with their counterparts around the globe. I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing the contributions of the Uni-Capitol Internship Program and to once more thank Hannah Blyth for her dedication and hard work.

H.R. 3590, H.R. 2954 AND H.R. 3964

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2014*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last week, I voted against three bills designed to weaken important environmental laws and roll back protections for our wilderness areas, parks, and wildlife.

Many of my constituents love Oregon's public lands and use them for hiking, hunting and fishing. They value efforts to conserve and responsibly manage these lands. H.R. 3590, the "Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act," will not, however, ensure responsible management and access. Rather, it contained measures to roll back important environmental laws, to curb public engagement in management decisions and limit the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to appropriately regulate toxic lead in ammunition.

I joined a number of my colleagues in offering an amendment to H.R. 3590 to ensure the Secretary of the Interior maintains the authority to consider climate change when making decisions regarding conservation and recreational activities on public lands. I was disappointed that this amendment failed, and I will continue to use every opportunity to elevate the importance of climate change.

H.R. 2954, the misleadingly named "Public Access and Lands Improvement Act," also weakens protections for wildlife conservation at treasured places like Yellowstone National Park, the Grand Tetons and Cape Hatteras.

Finally, H.R. 3964, the "Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Emergency Water Delivery Act," will do nothing to help with serious drought conditions in California and overrides state and federal protections for wildlife and water quality. The bill sets a dangerous precedent by favoring certain water interests over others, disrupting the State's ongoing efforts to bring people together to find long-term, science-based solutions to manage this severe water crisis.