

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the Prince William County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for showcasing the power of Dr. King's tireless commitment to equality and in congratulating the talented youth of the 2023 MLK Youth Oratorical Contest. Let us learn from our young people and consider how we might honor Dr. King's legacy by seeking justice in our own communities.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RESTORING EQUAL AND ACCOUNTABLE LEGISLATORS IN THE HOUSE ACT

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 30, 2023*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Restoring Equal and Accountable Legislators in the House (REAL House) Act. This legislation would expand the number of members of the U.S. House of Representatives to restore the chamber's direct link to the public and foster greater diversity among Representatives and the Electoral College.

Members of the House of Representatives are their constituent's most direct connection to the federal government and its resources and services. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of the proactive and local constituent services unique to House members. However, the number of constituents living in a single congressional district has dramatically increased since the number of House members was arbitrarily capped in 1929. Current district sizes threaten the direct constituent connection on which the House was founded. Simply, congressional districts are too large.

Today, there are 435 voting members of the House of Representatives, a cap from when the U.S. population was only 122 million people. With the current U.S. population of 328 million people and the same number of representatives, the size of congressional districts has nearly tripled. The average congressional district now includes 800,000 constituents.

If Congress fails to act, by 2050 each member of Congress is on track to represent more than 1 million people.

This growing imbalance makes it more difficult for members to be responsive to the will of the people, and voters are more likely to sit out elections when their voice and input are not fully represented in government.

The artificial cap also has a more insidious effect: an unrepresentative Electoral College. In the Electoral College system, each state gets a certain number of electors based on its total number of representatives in Congress. As the disparity between the largest and smallest states widens, the votes of those in larger states matter less and less.

The REAL House Act will help our government better reflect our districts and constituent needs. To restore the House's direct link to the public and to foster greater diversity among Members and the Electoral College, we must increase the number of Representatives.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to enact this legislation and finally overcome the arbitrary cap of 435 voting members of this chamber.

RECOGNIZING THE ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF DALLAS, TEXAS

**HON. PAT FALLON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 30, 2023*

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the All Saints Catholic School of Dallas, Texas, for receiving its third Blue Ribbon award. All Saints Catholic is only one of 5 private schools in the great state of Texas to receive this prestigious award. We continue to extend our earnest congratulations to the students, educators, and families of All Saints Catholic.

Since 1982, the Department of Education has annually bestowed the Blue Ribbon Award to select public and private schools who have displayed outstanding academic progress and achievement. All Saints Catholic was one of the highest-performing schools in Texas and nationwide. Of the nearly 10,000 Blue Ribbons awarded over the past 4 decades, only 170 schools have had the honor of receiving 3 Blue Ribbons, putting All Saints Catholic in the top 1 percent of Blue Ribbon recipients.

All Saints Catholic's historic performances showcases the enduring work of its students, teachers, and staff to create a safe and welcoming school environment that focuses on success. I'm proud to represent such talented minds and I wish them the best of luck in their school year.

I have requested the United States flag be flown over our Nation's Capitol to recognize the hard-earned academic accomplishments of All Saints Catholic and their efforts to prepare our youth for success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS POPULATION STABILIZATION ACT

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN**

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 30, 2023*

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Northern Mariana Islands Population Stabilization Act. The bill is intended to bolster our nation's strategic interests in the Western Pacific by maintaining the population and prosperity of the Marianas, the district I represent.

The Marianas is part of the chain of U.S. and U.S.-affiliated islands that faces Chinese expansion in the region. Through the Marianas, the U.S. controls an ocean area of 289,000 square miles, greater than the size of Texas.

Yet, the U.S. presence here is at risk. According to the 2020 decennial census the population of the Marianas declined by 12.2 percent since the 2010 census. This is the second largest decline among all states and non-state areas of our Nation over that 10-year period.

This population erosion—and the loss of economic viability that results—occurs against the backdrop of increased competition with China in the Western Pacific, a time when the United States needs to be strengthening our

position in the region, not shrinking in significance.

There are many reasons why people are leaving the Marianas. There are better public services and greater economic opportunity in the mainland United States. The anxiety stemming from the repeated and hyper-destructive typhoons associated with accelerating climate change also factors in the decision to leave. I refer Members to the article "People are fleeing Puerto Rico, Guam and every other U.S. territory. What gives?" in the Washington Post edition of September 23, 2022, for a discussion of population loss in all the U.S. insular areas. The article, "Perfect Storm. When is it time to abandon a place to climate change?" in Harpers Magazine's October 2022 edition tracks the decision of one family in the Marianas to leave their home to escape the impacts of climate change.

Population decline, whether in the islands or in rural areas of the continental United States, creates a negative feedback loop. Reduced tax revenues limit the ability of local governments to improve services. And the reduced consumer base and labor pool throttle business. You can see this affect in the drop in Gross Domestic Product in the Marianas. GDP fell 11.2 percent in 2019, the most recent available data, a decline that would have been even more severe but for the COVID-related relief that Congress provided.

The Northern Mariana Islands Population Stabilization Act builds on several laws enacted during the Trump administration and on previous action by the House.

In the 116th Congress, we passed this same legislation by voice vote without dissent. It allows certain long-term foreign workers and investors already lawfully present in the islands to apply for permanent status in the Marianas-only. Previously, President Trump had approved USPL 115-218, defining these long-term workers, and signed USPL 116-24, creating the Marianas-only resident status.

The Marianas-only resident status that President Trump sanctioned provides no eligibility for public assistance. It bars entry into any other part of the United States except for purpose of transit through Guam to a non-U.S. destination. The status President Trump approved is revocable in case of communicable disease, criminal conviction, or terrorist activity.

Making this Marianas-only status available simply encourages continued residence and employment by people already lawfully present and gainfully employed; and doing so would help to stabilize the population in our islands.

After the House approved the legislation I have introduced today in the 116th Congress, the Senate took no action. In the intervening years, the population eligible for Marianas-only status—which by definition cannot increase—has shrunk from 2,600 to 1,600, underscoring the continuing flight and the urgent need for us to act.

In this time of heightened concern about spending, I do want to remind the House that the Congressional Budget Office determined in 2019 this legislation has negligible effect on direct spending. That assessment must remain the same in 2023, as the number of affected individuals has only declined.

I ask all Members to support this simple, straightforward response to the problem of population loss in the Marianas. It is not a