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CELEBRATING U.S. CHESS OLYMPIAD TEAMS DURING NATIONAL CHESS WEEK

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate National Chess Week and recognize the remarkable accomplishments of this year's U.S. Chess Olympiad teams, who recently traveled to Budapest, Hungary. Across the country, chess players young and old gather in parks, coffee shops, schools, and dorm rooms to analyze legendary games between grandmasters, play rapid games, and forge lasting friendships.

As a chess enthusiast who has loved the game since elementary school, I have come to understand and appreciate that chess is not just a tremendous passion for millions of people, but a universal language and a powerful tool for the education of young people. Chess stirs and fortifies every player's emotional, psychological, and intellectual development.

Widely considered to be the pinnacle of international chess, the Chess Olympiad is a biennial competition organized by the World Chess Federation where teams from all over the world gather to compete. This September, the 45th Chess Olympiad was held in Budapest, Hungary, with 188 nations and territories competing in the Open section and 169 teams in the Women's competition—both record turnouts.

In just the second time in almost 70 years, both U.S. teams medaled. Teammates Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana, Grandmaster Wesley So, Grandmaster Lenier Dominguez, Grandmaster Levon Aronian, Grandmaster Ray Robson, team captain International Master John Donaldson, and coach Grandmaster Mikhail Antipov secured a silver medal in the Open competition.

Their colleagues on the U.S. Women's team, International Master Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova, International Master Carissa Yip, Grandmaster Irina Krush, International Master Alice Lee, International Master Anna Zatonskih, team captain Grandmaster Melikset Khachiyani and coach Grandmaster Alexander Onischuk, took the bronze. Each of these remarkable chess players embodies the mission of U.S. Chess to "empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess." I have no doubt that the members of this year's U.S. teams will inspire future generations to excel at chess and to spread love of the game.

In my district, the U.S. Chess Center, established in beautiful Silver Spring, has shared chess with 40,000 students at over 150 schools across the National Capital Region. Former world champion and Grandmaster Garry Kasparov, perhaps the greatest chess player who has ever lived, played a significant role in encouraging the creation of this vibrant institution and made short work of the Eighth District's United States Representative when we played, although it was still a great experience. Nearby, the recently established D.C. Chess Association promotes the joy of chess across our Nation's Capital.

Mr. Speaker, chess is for everyone to play and enjoy. During this National Chess Week, we invite Americans of all backgrounds and abilities to experience the timeless magic and strategic beauty of chess, and I again congratulate both U.S. Chess Olympiad teams on their historic achievements. May their continued success inspire generations of future champions.