

IN RECOGNITION OF RALPH BUNCHE HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

of Virginia

in the House of Representatives

Monday, June 22, 2020

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the great history of Ralph Bunche High School in King George County, Virginia. As one of the first African-American schools to receive equitable contributions in its funding, Ralph Bunche High set the standard for our nation in addressing racial inequality.

At the time of Ralph Bunche High School's inception, America was still under the wing of the discriminatory Jim Crow laws. It was a somber period where African-Americans were treated unjustly and were not afforded equitable opportunities. Moreover, school segregation made it such that African-American students were not sufficiently supported in terms of decent provisions in technology, infrastructure, and even quality of education.

Finally, on July 29, 1948, Civil Action 631 set the stage for the construction of Ralph Bunche High School and provided much-needed relief for the students that attended the school. Just like other prominent civil rights leaders, the plaintiffs for this case faced the same dangers from radical segregationists. Nevertheless, the brave plaintiffs, composed of pupils and concerned parents, persevered and provided a great service to their community by advocating for equal financial distribution for African-American students.

The construction of Ralph Bunche High School was a landmark event for King George County. The school's namesake has a noteworthy history in serving both his community and country. For instance, his steadfast efforts in achieving the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the Arab states and Israel culminated in his award for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. In addition, during the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Bunche played a significant role by participating in iconic events, like the 1963 March on Washington.

To sum up, the legacy of Ralph Bunche High School lives as strong today as it did in 1949. Among the first cases to be brought forward, Civil Action 631 began a series of cases that ultimately led to the integration of African-American students nationwide and mandated that the latter receive equitable educational support. Having the school named after Dr. Bunche proved highly commendable and the school's designation as a State and National Historic Landmark was well-deserved.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I ask that you rise with me in remembering the history of Ralph Bunche High School, the heroes that participated in its birth and those who continue the legacy to preserve educational equality.