

Agent Michel Maceda is one of those heroes.

For years, Agent Maceda served as a U.S. Army veteran, a former Border Patrol agent, and a Marine Corps interdiction agent for CBP's Air and Marine Operations. He was a dedicated public servant who put his life on the line time and time again.

On November 17, 2022, Agent Maceda was doing his job stopping drug smugglers in the high seas. On that day, Agent Maceda and other marine agents interdicted a narcotics-smuggling vessel just 12 miles off the coast of Puerto Rico.

During the ensuing gunfight, Agent Maceda was killed and two other agents were seriously injured. Thanks to their heroic actions that day, 3,000 pounds of cocaine did not reach our country.

This bill renames the CBP Air and Marine Operations unit in Puerto Rico after Agent Maceda.

A few months ago, I visited Puerto Rico, and Agent Maceda's name came up again and again and again. It is clear that Agent Maceda is missed by his community and his colleagues.

With this bill, we honor Agent Maceda's sacrifice and commitment to our Nation, as well as the work of others like Agent Maceda, those who put their lives at stake on a day-to-day basis to protect the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan legislation, H.R. 5302, the Michel O. Maceda Memorial Act. This bill will designate the Mayaguez Marine Unit of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations or CBP AMO in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, in honor of Marine Interdiction Agent Michel Maceda, who died in the line of duty while conducting a drug interdiction operation off the island's coast.

On the morning of November 17, 2022, CBP AMO agents were alerted of a suspicious vessel located approximately 13 miles off the southwestern coast of Puerto Rico.

Marine Interdiction Agents Michel Maceda, Jorge Santiago, and Mark Lamphere arrived in the area to intercept the boat suspected of smuggling cocaine. As they were boarding the vessel, one of the drug traffickers opened fire on them.

Agents Santiago and Lamphere were gravely injured. Agent Santiago has thankfully recovered and is back to full duty. Agent Lamphere continues the long recovery from his wounds in anticipation of returning to full duty soon. It has been 2 years.

Unfortunately, Agent Maceda was mortally wounded during the shoot-out and passed away later that day in the hospital.

Agent Maceda began his CBP career in April of 2016 as a U.S. Border Patrol agent in Douglas, Arizona. In 2021, he transferred to AMO and served as a marine interdiction agent with the Mayaguez Marine Unit in Puerto Rico until the time of his death. Prior to joining CBP, Agent Maceda honorably served our Nation in the U.S. Army as a wheeled vehicle mechanic. He is survived by his daughter, brother, and parents.

Agent Maceda's death is a stark reminder of the dangers our CBP agents face each day to secure our Nation's borders, including our Caribbean border in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. His sacrifice is also a testament to their bravery and unwavering commitment to keep our communities safe.

For the heroic actions during the November of 2022 drug interdiction operation off Puerto Rico's coast, which led to the seizure of over 2,900 pounds of cocaine, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy recognized Agent Maceda, CBP AMO's Caribbean air and marine branch, and partners from the U.S. Coast Guard and the Puerto Rico Police Bureau with a 2022 Marine Interdiction Award.

In February of 2023, CBP began construction of a new modernized facility for the Mayaguez Marine Unit, Agent Maceda's unit, to support its critical border security mission in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean region. I had the honor of attending the groundbreaking ceremony and made a commitment to work in Congress to rename the unit after this American hero. I am glad that today we are one step closer to making this a reality.

Agent Maceda gave his life protecting Puerto Rico and the rest of our Nation from the threats posed by drug traffickers and transnational criminal organizations. Officially designating the CBP AMO Mayaguez Marine Unit as the Michel Maceda Marine Unit will be a fitting tribute to his memory and sacrifice.

I thank the Homeland Security Committee chair, Mr. GREEN, and the ranking member for cosponsoring and helping bring this bill to the floor, but I also thank Senator RICK SCOTT of Florida, who introduced a companion version of my bill.

Let me also thank the men and women of CBP for their work to secure our Nation's land and maritime borders and their support for this legislation to honor their fallen colleague. In particular, I recognize AMO Executive Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Miller and CBP's Office of Congressional Affairs for their assistance and advocacy for this bill.

Lastly, I commend the Federal and local law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico who have made it a priority to seek justice for Agent Maceda and ensure those responsible for his death face the consequences of their crime.

A joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Homeland

Security investigations, with the collaboration of CBP, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Puerto Rico Police Bureau targeted the drug trafficking organizations responsible for killing Agent Maceda and injuring his two partners. As of today, Federal agencies have arrested, and the U.S. Attorney's office has indicted, 18 individuals.

As we approach the 2-year anniversary of his death, I urge my colleagues in the House to support H.R. 5302 and ensure we honor Marine Interdiction Agent Maceda's life, sacrifice, and the legacy of his service.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I thank Congresswoman GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN for introducing this legislation and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support. By passing this bill, we honor the memory of Agent Maceda and the other men and women of DHS who, like Agent Maceda, risk their lives on a daily basis to protect us here in this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5302, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5302. The frontline personnel who work tirelessly to protect our homeland are the reason we can all sleep soundly at night. This bill extends our gratitude to Michel O. Maceda for his heroism and service to this great Nation. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5302.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT EDUCATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4259) to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to require notification with respect to individualized education program teams, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4259

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Think Differently about Education Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR IEP TEAMS.

Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(8) NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—At the beginning of each school year, each local educational agency, State educational agency, or other State agency, as the case may be, shall notify each parent of a child with a disability in the agency’s jurisdiction that such parent may, under paragraph (1)(B)(vi), include individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate, as part of the individualized education program team for such child.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials on H.R. 4259.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4259, the Think Differently about Education Act of 2023.

America’s children are our Nation’s future leaders, and they deserve to be equipped with the resources they need to succeed in the classroom. This is something that everyone can and should agree on. Every child, including children with learning differences, has unique needs that must be met and understood by teachers and school administrators.

H.R. 4259 builds on existing progress achieved by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by adding another layer of critical protections for parents of children with disabilities.

Under this legislation, educational agencies would be required to properly inform parents of their right to bring in outside experts who can advocate for the best interests of their children when it comes to their education. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, this bill will improve families’ ability to advocate for their children to receive an education that allows them to flourish.

Mr. Speaker, this is a solution that safeguards parental rights and reaffirms the fundamental role of parents in the care, upbringing, and education of their children. The simple truth is that every child has the potential to flourish when given the right support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the bill H.R. 4259.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion is withdrawn.

THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT EDUCATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 4259) to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to require notification with respect to individualized education program teams, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4259

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Think Differently about Education Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR IEP TEAMS.

Section 614(d)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (iv), by redesignating subclauses (I) through (III) as items (aa) through (cc), respectively (and by conforming the margins accordingly);

(2) by redesignating clauses (i) through (vii) as subclauses (I) through (VII), respectively (and by conforming the margins accordingly);

(3) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as so redesignated, by striking “The term” and inserting the following:

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The term”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—Within a reasonable timeframe prior to the first convening of the individualized education program team for a child with a disability for a school year, the local educational agency that serves such child shall notify the parent of such child that such parent may, under clause (i)(VI), include other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate, as part of the individualized education program team.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4259.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 4259, the Think Differently about Education Act.

The bill requires schools to notify parents of their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Parents can invite experts with specialized knowledge of their child to attend the child’s individualized education program meeting. This is important because key decisions are being made about their child’s education in this meeting.

This proposal actually restates present law, but it ensures that parents

are aware of and can exercise a right they have under current law.

However, I want to make it clear that I am not advocating for further amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and encourage my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO), the bill’s sponsor.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful that my Think Differently about Education Act has come to the floor today.

This builds off of an initiative we launched in my home county about a decade ago. We launched the ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative as a means of embracing every one of every ability, creating a community that is more welcoming and supportive. The focus has been to break down barriers and create opportunities for those with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities.

ThinkDIFFERENTLY is simply a call to action. This bill, the Think Differently about Education Act, builds on the success of that ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative.

This bill requires that public schools, K–12, notify parents of a child with a disability about their right to a third-party advocate in IEP meetings. Individualized education program plans are a document that outlines the educational needs of children with a disability, tailored specifically for them in coordination with the school, the parent or guardian, and the child.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, commonly known as IDEA, requires public schools to develop an IEP plan for every student with a disability. IDEA also entitles that the child and parent are able to bring a third-party advocate to the IEP meeting. However, in most cases, sadly, parents are unaware of their rights. Because of that, CSE meetings are conducted without parents knowing what resources, support, and educational opportunities might be available to their children.

In many cases, this leaves parents and guardians who are not always familiar with IDEA and everything that should be included in an IEP confused and, sadly, left out, their children losing great opportunity, which is also often self-interested. Many times, school districts are focused on financial benefits instead of providing the direct benefits of a quality and full education to those with disabilities.

Now, I know this firsthand as the parent of a child with a disability. While my daughter, Abigail, now 20 years old, continues to benefit from quality education in our home school district, too many families like ours have had to navigate this system without the knowledge of and partnership of a third-party advocate.