

Honorable Ron Barber of Arizona

Congressional Recognition for MacAidan Gallegos

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Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to welcome back to Tucson a very special boy who is coming to visit his father's gravesite on the third anniversary of his burial.

MacAidan Gallegos is the son of United States Army Staff Sergeant Justin Gallegos, a brave soldier, who was tragically killed three years ago in Afghanistan. Born in Tucson, Arizona, Justin graduated from Tucson High School before joining the Army in 2002.

Staff Sergeant Gallegos deployed twice to Iraq, fighting insurgents and helping to secure freedom for Iraqi citizens who were yearning for an end to the repression they had experienced for generations. He then deployed to Afghanistan, in support of the American effort there to put down the Taliban, fight al-Qaida and help the Afghan people.

Justin often requested the hard assignments. Except for his wife Amanda and his son MacAidan, the Army was his life. He was a fearless man who worked as a scout in hostile terrain, a gunner on Humvees and as a security guard to high-ranking officers.

As a testament to his courage and dedication as a soldier, Justin earned more than a dozen medals including three Purple Hearts, two Army Commendation Medals and two Army Achievement Medals. He also earned the Bronze Star for his actions that day defending his combat outpost with his comrades and fighting back the Taliban.

MacAidan is coming to Tucson to visit his father's grave at Evergreen Cemetery. While the visit will be sad, I am positive that MacAidan, and his mother Amanda Marr will relive the wonderful times they spent with Justin. My hope is that MacAidan will continue to learn about Justin - a fantastic dad, brave soldier and deeply loved husband.

I am honored to meet MacAidan, and share in the memories of his father and of his time in Tucson. It is in remembrance that we keep the faith of a father lost, missed and revered. Yet we also celebrate his shining achievements, his bravery as a soldier and his beautiful boy MacAidan.