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Rep. Barrow Honors Local Teacher from Clarke Central High School

Delivers speech highlighting the commitment and dedication of his 11th grade English teacher, Bertha Musick; declares that today's teachers are "overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated"

Washington, DC – In honor of National Teacher Day, 12th District Congressman John Barrow (D-GA) last night spoke from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to honor the commitment and hard work of America's public school teachers. In particular, Barrow took the time to reflect on those teachers who had a profound impact on his life, most notably his 11th grade English teacher, Bertha Musick:

"Thank you Mr. Speaker. Today, on National Teacher Day, I want to encourage all my constituents and all my colleagues to take just a moment to thank those teachers who helped us get where we are today, oftentimes despite ourselves.

"For me, those teachers included Ms. Moseley, Ms. Goodwyn, Ms. Rapley, Ms. Hughes, and a host of others, but the teacher I want to single out is Ms. Bertha Musick. She just recently celebrated her 96th birthday and is still going strong.

"She was my 11th Grade English teacher, and she was tough as nails. Every day, it was her job to hammer an understanding – and an appreciation – of good English into the heads of an 11th grade class full of thick skulled teenagers.

"Ms. Musick meant business. And while she had a reputation of being tough, every one of her students came to realize that her toughness was driven by her devotion. Many of us understood that at the time, all of us came to understand it over time.

"I can't tell you how many times I've heard her describe how former students who used to think of her as the "enemy" came back to her, sometimes many years after, to thank her for caring enough to be tough. Not just caring enough about her work, but caring enough about her students. They were right.

"Someone once defined an education as what you remember after you forget 99% of what you learned in school. What Ms. Musick taught me, and hundreds of other impressionable youngsters, is the value of not giving in and not giving up.

“That’s what defined a good teacher in Ms. Musick’s day, and that’s what defines public school teachers today who are overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated.

“So, to Ms. Musick, at 96 years strong, I just want to say ‘Thank you.’

“Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time.”

For more information on National Teacher Day, visit: <http://www.nea.org/teacherday/index.html>.

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