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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 12, 2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On Yogi Berra's 90th birthday, I write to urge you to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his military service and civil rights and educational activism. The son of Italian immigrants Pietro and Paolina, Berra is one of the most respected baseball minds of all time, a man of unimpeachable integrity and respect, and a pillar in our community in northern New Jersey.

As you know, Berra has had an impressive 19 year baseball career, where he was an All-Star for 15 seasons, named the Most Valuable Player of the American League three times and has appeared in an astounding 21 World Series, including 13 World Series championships. In addition to his impressive baseball accolades, he befriended Jackie Robinson and Lou Castro, the first black and Latino baseball players in Major League Baseball respectively. Now he serves as an ambassador for Athlete Ally where he champions LGBT rights in sports. However, prior to joining the major leagues he served his country by enlisting in the U. S. Navy during World War II, where he served as a gunner's mate on the USS Bayfield during the D-Day invasion of France.

In 1959 the Yankees hosted Yogi Berra Day, where Berra asked that the proceeds create a scholarship at Columbia University so future students who didn't have the financial means to attend would be able to receive an Ivy League education. Additionally, he continues to support educational opportunities through the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center located in Montclair, NJ. The Museum serves 20,000 students annually with character education programs and teaches the values of respect, sportsmanship and inclusion that Berra has demonstrated throughout his life and career.

Over the years I have watched Berra bring the Yankees many victories and bestow plenty of wisdom on America. As a champion and hero in more ways than can be counted, Berra is an American icon who is deserving of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress