

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF THE YEAR: ROSE AKORO

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Rose Akoro as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Rose is a proud mother of 8 children, an active member of her church, and a dedicated caregiver who provides for the needs of elderly clients. She has been a caregiver with 24 Hour Home Care for many years where her experience and compassion help her provide care to individuals unable to perform the tasks of daily living without assistance.

Beyond her work, she is an active member of River Town Community Church in Antioch, where she has volunteered her time to provide groceries and school supplies to local children and families in need. She is passionate about educating and providing for the next generations, taking the time to counsel and advise the youth of her community. Rose is a hard-working and dedicated community servant who makes our district more compassionate and inclusive for the most vulnerable members of our society.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Rose Akoro for her positive contributions to our community.

IDEAL INSTITUTE GRADUATION

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I celebrate the achievements of the Ideal Institute of Technology Class of 2023. Through hard work and dedication, these graduates have achieved an incredible milestone, and they should be incredibly proud of their accomplishments. By choosing the Ideal Institute of Technology, these students allowed themselves to gain real-world experience through the hands-on approach that the Institute is known for. The Institute has ensured their graduates have every tool they need to be successful in this next phase of life. As they take the next step, I know without a doubt these graduates will continue to make our South Jersey community proud.

I extend my sincere congratulations to these graduates and wish them all the best in their future endeavors. God Bless the graduates of Ideal Institute of Technology, and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING SORAYA MÁRQUEZ FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Soraya Márquez has been the state director of Mi Familia Vota Florida since 2012 and has dedicated 18 years to the Central Florida community. Additionally, she has a bachelor's degree in international business and business administration.

Soraya has successfully assisted thousands of individuals navigating the citizenship process and has helped reach over 115,000 voters through registration efforts. She has also helped immigrant families without a defined status and hosted several immigration forums across public schools in several counties.

Through her work, she hopes to create a well-informed and integrated Latino community actively engaged in finding solutions to city, county, and school board issues. She also hopes to see massive participation of Latinos in every election to strengthen democracy and continue living in freedom.

Previously, Soraya was a member of the group of Founding Women and vice president and president of the Association of Professional and Businesswomen. She has also received the Ohtli Award from the Government of Mexico, recognitions from the educational systems of Orange County and Osceola County, as well as a "Hispanic Leader" recognition from Univision.

In her limited free time, Soraya dedicates herself 100 percent to her family, her most cherished treasure.

RECOGNIZING KESLEY WHITE

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Kesley White of Leadville, Colorado for receiving the United States Department of State Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. As part of this prestigious honor, Kesley traveled to Nepal to study abroad.

U.S. Study Abroad programs are an important component of the federal government's efforts to ensure Americans of all backgrounds have the opportunity to gain global experiences and work across our borders to help address our world's greatest challenges. The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship provides exceptional undergraduate students with the opportunity to expand their cultural proficiencies, study critical need languages, and conduct STEM research. The scholarship has empowered over 41,000 individuals with financial need to engage in people-to-people diplomacy

and prepare for distinguished careers in public service.

I commend Kesley for pursuing an exemplary international education and representing America abroad as a citizen ambassador. This scholarship rightly recognizes a commitment to academic excellence. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is a privilege to recognize Kesley's many accomplishments.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN HERO ARTHUR WATSON

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Arthur Watson. Arthur never shied away from protecting his country and fellow man. Before joining the Merchant Marines in 1943, Arthur spent two years helping with reconstruction in Pearl Harbor where he built warehouses and storage facilities to support the Pacific War effort as a member of the Civilian Construction Corps.

As a Mariner during the height of WWII, he was stationed on the SS *Oklahoma* when his ship was torpedoed by a German Nazi sub. Despite the explosion throwing him to the ground, the heat blistering his face, and flames engulfing the ship, Arthur fought to make his way below deck. He rushed to his station to help an Officer crank the lifeboat out to the ocean where he and 21 others survived for 18 days at sea. After this harrowing experience, his work was not done. He would sail out again, bringing supplies to the forces across Europe before eventually leaving the Merchant Marines.

An honorable Veteran and hero to 21 shipmates, he passed away on Thursday, October 5 at the age 103 in Grapevine, TX. Through his courage and bravery, Arthur encapsulated what it means to have selfless service and patriotism.

I would like to thank Arthur for his irreplaceable sacrifices to protect our freedom, and I hope you'll join me in praying for his family and friends.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF THE YEAR: SYLVIA SERRANO

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Sylvia Serrano as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Sylvia is a dedicated and passionate leader who has touched the lives of countless members of her community. Sylvia proudly represents her home of Hercules as the President

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

of the Bay Front Chamber of Commerce where she works to help promote local small businesses. Since joining the Chamber of Commerce, Sylvia has demonstrated outstanding leadership and played an instrumental role in fostering economic growth and development in Hercules. She has demonstrated her commitment to growing the economy of Contra Costa County by helping local businesses navigate a way out of the COVID-19 pandemic. She also serves as Director of the Hercules Education Foundation where her work has helped enhance the educational opportunities for youth in Hercules.

She has helped raise contributions from individuals, organizations, businesses, and institutions to enhance the quality of the classroom experience in Hercules's public schools. Sylvia is known to go above and beyond to engage with her community and approach everyone with a warm and compassionate nature.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Sylvia Serrano for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING SAMUEL VILCHEZ
SANTIAGO FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Samuel Vilchez Santiago, originally from Venezuela, came to the United States at an early age, escaping political persecution from Venezuela's authoritarian regime. He is a non-profit leader and advocate who has dedicated his professional career to fighting to protect the rights of Floridians.

Samuel has served as the Florida state director for the American Business Immigration Coalition, the human and civil rights non-profit manager at ActBlue, and the Florida campaign manager at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, among others. He is also a board member at Alianza Center, the HOPE Community Center, and the Venezuelan American Caucus. He also served as a member of the Orange County Charter Review Commission in 2020, becoming the youngest member of a county board in Orange County history. Through these roles, Samuel has helped to effectively design and implement policies that have improved the quality of life of those around him, including protecting in-state tuition access for Dreamers in Florida, the designation and re-designation of TPS for 800,000 Venezuelans, the creation of the humanitarian parole program, and the critical environmental protections to clean water and the Split Oak forest.

Samuel has also worked to advance Democratic values and candidates at the local, state, and federal levels. He currently serves as the chair of the Orange County Democratic Executive Committee and is a member of the Democratic National Committee, making him the first Gen-Z person to hold both of these leadership roles. In 2018, he led a successful youth-run campaign to elect Johanna López to the Orange County School Board, making her the first Latina member of the Board.

Samuel graduated as valedictorian from Colonial High School in 2015 and obtained a

bachelor's degree from Princeton University and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Oxford. He is a recipient of former President Barack Obama's Volunteer Service Award, the Congressional Youth Award, and the Eisenhower Fellowship.

GINO MARTIGNETTI

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, this June, I had the honor of celebrating Gino Martignetti's achievement of the rank of Eagle Scout. Gino joined the Scouts at the age of eleven, beginning as a Tiger Cub Scout and quickly rising through the ranks. After transitioning to the Boy Scouts, Gino continued to thrive with the Scouts, and he has now achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. He is an involved member of the Scouting community having held several leadership positions over the years, including Chaplin's Aide, Den Chief, Assistant Patrol Leader, and Quartermaster. For his Eagle Scout Service Project, Gino generously donated his time and his efforts to build a gaga ball pit for Guardian Angels Regional School in Gibbstown, South Jersey. Gino will be continuing his education at Rowan College of Gloucester County starting this fall where he will be participating in their Physical Therapy Assistant Program.

It is my privilege to recognize his achievements and I wish him the best in all his future endeavors. God Bless Gino Manignetti and God Bless the United States of America.

HONORING REVEREND MARVIN
CHANDLER: PASTOR, PEACE-
MAKER, AND MUSICIAN

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I rise to honor Reverend Marvin Chandler, my constituent, and a renowned Hoosier who made profound accomplishments in the Civil Rights Movement, as a jazz musician, and through his work as a pastor promoting peace. Rev. Chandler was born in Bloomington, Indiana on October 3, 1929, and he was 93 years old when he died at his home in Indianapolis on September 23, 2023.

After graduating from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1963, Rev. Chandler was appointed as Associate Executive Director of the Rochester Area Council of Churches—as the Council's Christian Education Director. The following year, during the tragic Rochester Race Riots, Reverend Chandler served as a liaison between the Black community of Rochester and the Council of Churches. Working with a small group of community and church leaders he helped to facilitate recovery efforts from the 1964 riots.

Rev. Chandler helped establish the Rochester Area Ministers Conference and was integral in the launch of the Freedom, Independence, God, Honor, Today (FIGHT) organization, a community organization formed in the

aftermath of Rochester's 1964 riots. FIGHT advocated for change, taking on issues such as hiring practices, living conditions, and other critical areas. FIGHT leaders were also credited with stopping additional civil unrest when rioting hit other northern cities in the mid-1960s.

As a part of FIGHT, Chandler not only served on the steering committee, but also played a key role in FIGHT's negotiations with Kodak. He worked with Kodak representatives to develop a job training program for the large number of unemployed black Rochesterians. Similarly, in 1971 Chandler put his peace-making abilities toward efforts to resolve the prison riot in Attica County.

After leaving Rochester, the Reverend Chandler served as an executive with the San Francisco Council of Churches. He was a leading expert on the life of Howard Thurman, the noted theologian, philosopher, and civil rights leader. Later, Rev. Chandler was a visiting professor at Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, and he served as a visitor for a semester at Oxford University, England.

Rev. Chandler received numerous awards over his lifetime, including an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana, and the Luke Mowbray Award for ecumenical work from the American Baptist Churches/USA in 2008.

The Reverend was also an accomplished jazz pianist, inducted into the Indianapolis Jazz Foundation Hall of Fame in 2003, and a recipient of the Ralph Adams Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life of a generous and inspiring leader, Rev. Marvin Chandler.

RECOGNIZING MR. MICHAEL
BOWERS

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Mr. Michael Bowers as he is awarded the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award from the African American Network of Kern County. Mr. Bowers is a Central Valley native, having spent the majority of his childhood and professional career in Bakersfield. He attended Texas Southern University and graduated with a degree in political science in 2005. After graduation, Mr. Bowers returned to Bakersfield where he began his career at Making a Difference, a local non-profit organization. Mr. Bowers joined my team when I was elected to the California State Assembly in 2010, first serving as Deputy Field Director and later as Community Liaison. When I was elected to Congress in 2012, Mr. Bowers joined my district office as a Senior Field Representative. His knowledge of the issues facing the Central Valley and strong relationships with members of the community were invaluable during my first term in Congress. After departing my team, Mr. Bowers became the Deputy District Director for State Senator Andy Vidak.

For over a decade, Mr. Bowers has partnered with local stakeholders on community engagement and economic development

projects that prioritized the well-being of residents in the Central Valley. In 2018, Mr. Bowers joined Centric Healthcare, where he currently serves as the Vice President of Public Relations and Government Affairs. Over his career, Mr. Bowers has been incredibly involved in our community, including sitting on the boards of the Alzheimer's Association, Kern Health Systems, and the Kern Law Enforcement Foundation. He was also the Chairman of the Board of the Housing Authority of the County of Kern and helped the agency raise over \$500,000 for the supportive living program, which provides low-income families in Kern County with the opportunity to become first-time home buyers. This year, Mr. Bowers was appointed Commissioner of the Kern County Civil Service Commission. Mr. Bowers has received numerous accolades recognizing his decades of service to the community. He has been recognized by the Kern County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Bakersfield Life Magazine, California Teachers Association, and other organizations for his decades of leadership, dedication, and advocacy for residents of Kern County.

Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating Mr. Michael Bowers as he is awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award and thanking him for his service to the people of the Central Valley.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: TAMURI RICHARDSON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Tamuri Richardson as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Tamuri is a dedicated and passionate leader and advocate who has touched the lives of countless members of the Solano County community. Tamuri is President of the Solano Black Chamber of Commerce where she works to support, uplift, and build Black businesses. Under her leadership, the chamber has expanded its membership, growing from 50 paid participants to over 700, established the first Fairfield Juneteenth festival, established a Business Entrepreneurship Academy providing mentorship to over 25 new businesses, and secured multiple grants to assist local small businesses. She has also led the way in building relationships between the Chamber and elected officials, allowing her to advocate effectively for the needs of businesses in her community.

Tamuri is also a business owner herself as President and CEO of TLeanne Speaking Pros. She is an international best-selling author, motivational speaker, and mental health advocate who is known for her strength and resiliency.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Tamuri Richardson for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING MARCELA RESTREPO
FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Marcela Restrepo has been a professional in the construction industry for more than 24 years. She is the co-owner of SkyBuilders USA, general contractors, and co-founder of the nonprofit SkyBuilders 4 ALL.

Marcela has served on several boards through Orange County. She is the vice president of Casa de Mexico, a member of the Women Business Advisory Board in Seminole College, a former member of the BOD Neighborhood Grants Advisory Board in Orange County, and a former member of the BOD Community Development Advisory Board in Orange County.

Marcela advocates for minority-owned businesses. She vigorously promotes to get certification through seminars that she is invited to or through her foundation. Her company was awarded the Don Quijote award in 2022 by HCCMO. She was also recognized as *Mujer de Impacto 2023* by *Mujer Emprende Latina*.

Marcela loves her community. With SkyBuilders 4 ALL, she created a food pantry in one of Orlando's local schools and they provided food during the pandemic to families that were struggling. Her foundation also provides financial education to young kids and promotes reading.

Marcela also helps the community through space that the Mexican Consulate provides, with financial education for the Hispanic community six days a week at no cost. That program counts on about 20 allies, including banks, financial institutions, accountants, and realtors all working as volunteers.

Additionally, housing is a priority. With her foundation, she has been able to help people in the community improve their way of living. Giving back to the community is a must in her life because she wants to leave her children, Manuela, Pablo, David, and Ximena, and her grandson Valentino, a legacy of pride in their roots. She will continue serving as long as God lets her.

GEORGE CAPPUCCIO

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, in April, I had the pleasure of attending the Quilt of Valor Ceremony honoring George Cappuccio, a World War II Veteran who served our country as an artilleryman. During the war, he was stationed in Germany, France, and Italy and for each he can recount many harrowing tales. After the war, he moved back to Hamonton to care for his aging parents and has lived there ever since. During the 1950's, George and his brother started a local business called Capp's Greenhouse which was loved by many in the area. Throughout his life, George had a passion for music, giving trumpet and guitar lessons for years as well as a stint as a member of a

band. He shared this passion with his wife, Aggie, as the two of them taught dance lessons for members of their community. After celebrating his 102nd birthday this past February, George is now the oldest member of the American F.A. Funston Post 186.

I extend my utmost gratitude for George's service to this country and to his dedication to his South Jersey community. God Bless George Cappuccio, and God Bless our United States of America.

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE KHOURY

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today, I want to recognize the outstanding contributions of George Khoury, a community leader who proudly served as founding board member of ACCESS, a leading service organization in Michigan's 12th District, as we mourn his loss.

Mr. Khoury was born in Jerusalem, Palestine in 1942 and immigrated to the United States in 1961, eventually making his home in southeast Michigan. Mr. Khoury knew firsthand the challenges facing immigrants and new Americans. Through his strong connections to the Arab American community, Mr. Khoury came together with others who saw the need for an organization that would create a welcoming space, as well as connect people with critical human services, such as English as a Second Language classes, career training, and healthcare. George Khoury was incredibly proud of seeing his vision for community empowerment come to life and to see ACCESS thrive and grow in the services it offers.

In addition to his monumental work with ACCESS, Mr. Khoury served in leadership roles at a number of local and national organizations. He co-founded the Detroit chapter of Arab American University Graduates as well as the Organization of Arab Students (OAS) at Wayne State University. He was an active member of the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee of Michigan.

Please join me in recognizing the legacy of George Khoury. He was an inspiration and a leader, whose loss is deeply felt.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LOUIS F.
WILLIAMS

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today in recognition of the life and legacy of Louis F. Williams, a distinguished Navy Veteran who passed away earlier this year. Lou was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, who proudly dedicated his life to serving our country in the United States Navy. During this difficult time, my thoughts and condolences are with the Williams family, including Lou's loving wife, Theresa, his children, Katherine Arsenault, Frederick Williams, and Patricia Berube, his 11 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Born in Warren, Pennsylvania, Lou enlisted in the Navy the year he graduated high school, selflessly serving as an Aviation structural Mechanic (Hydraulic) Petty Officer 3rd Class. After his honorable discharge, Lou dedicated 35 years as a machinist foreman for the Wakefield Corp. in Wakefield, Massachusetts. Always one to pursue his passions, Lou turned his hobby for maple sugaring during his retirement into a full-fledged product, Williams Bros. Maple Syrup. In their golden years, Lou and Theresa moved to Fremont, New Hampshire to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Lou loved to share stories of his cherished childhood memories on the family farm, learning to shoot and fish, and continued this passion throughout his life.

Lou will be fondly remembered by the communities he touched and those he loved for years to come. His legacy of service, connection, and family will continue to inspire others. On behalf of the constituents of New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I would once again like to extend my condolences to the Williams family and wish them all the very best in this time of grieving.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF THE YEAR: MAYOR PRO TEMPORE TANISHA WALKER

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Mayor Pro Tempore Tanisha Walker as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Tanisha is a dedicated and passionate leader who has touched the lives of countless members in her community. Tanisha proudly represents her home as Mayor Pro Tempore of Antioch while simultaneously working as Executive Director of the Safe Return Project. Since joining the Antioch City Council in 2020, Tanisha has played an instrumental role in creating city programs to reduce gun violence, reduce oil and gas projects in her city, and implement a rent stabilization program to benefit those who are currently unhoused. Tanisha has also demonstrated a commitment to protecting formerly incarcerated individuals by helping found the Safe Return Project. Throughout her time with the organization, Tanisha has helped thousands of residents of Contra Costa County effectively transition out of the prison system and into meaningful and successful lives. Tanisha's unwavering devotion to her community is clearly shown through her outstanding leadership on the Antioch City Council and her unyielding dedication to protecting those impacted by the criminal justice system.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Tanisha Walker for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING LIZZETTE MARRERO FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Lizzette Marrero was born in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, where her passion for education was deeply influenced by her parents' dedication to teaching as well as her maternal grandmother. She graduated from la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Rio Piedras, with a bachelor's degree in secondary education, majoring in Spanish. In 1987, she became a Spanish teacher at a local Catholic school while pursuing a master's degree in curriculum and teaching, specializing in Hispanic studies.

Upon graduation, Marrero welcomed her first child, prompting a challenging decision to relocate with her family to Central Florida. Carrying her dreams, faith, and a profound sadness for leaving her homeland in a suitcase, she embraced this new chapter alongside her soulmate, Marcos Barreiro. As her family expanded with the addition of two more children, she adapted to a new culture, language, and community where Christmas lasted only two weeks.

In 1997, Marrero joined the Osceola County School District as a substitute teacher and was soon hired as a fifth-grade teacher at Boggy Creek Elementary School. The following year, she was appointed as a Spanish teacher, dedicating her professional life to her passion: the Spanish language, Hispanic literature, and Hispanic culture.

Marrero was among the original educators who established the Osceola County School for the Arts in 2003. Over the past 20 years at OCSA, she has excelled in nurturing a deep love for learning and culture in her students, both inside and outside the classroom.

Collaborating with her exceptional students, Marrero created and directed a vibrant Hispanic Heritage Festival that has captivated audiences for seventeen years at the Osceola Performing Arts Center. She also served on the Affirmative Action Committee in Osceola County, where she contributed to funding scholarships for graduate programs for fellow teachers in the county. Furthermore, she initiated and sponsored the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica: Capitulo Jorge Ramos and has guided students to compete at the Florida State Spanish Conference since 2007, achieving numerous awards.

Marrero's dedication to teaching AP Spanish Language and Culture has recently led her to become an AP Reader and Table Leader for the College Board. She firmly believes that setting high expectations paves the way to success and that it is an honor to be a Spanish teacher for so many wonderful humans.

DYLAN BRANCA

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, this April, I had the opportunity to attend Dylan Branca's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Dylan

joined the Boy Scouts in the fifth grade and shortly after achieved the Arrow of Light, the highest honor in Cub Scouts. Once he crossed over into the Boy Scouts, he hit the ground running with his troop, embarking on many adventures such as hiking Mount Washington and Tuckerman's Ravine. One of his most memorable adventures was the twelve-day trip to Philmont Scout Reserve in New Mexico, where Dylan had the opportunity to serve as their "Leave No Trace" Guide. For Dylan's Eagle Scout project, he planted lavender in the fields at Reed's farm in Egg Harbor Township. This lavender is now being used to produce different products such as soaps and oils while the fields are simultaneously serving as the location for community yoga classes. Dylan currently studies environmental science at Cedar Creek High School in the Magnet Program while simultaneously earning college credit.

It was a pleasure to attend Dylan's Eagle Scout Court of honor and he should be proud of his scouting achievements. God Bless Dylan, and God Bless our United States of America.

RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JOHN GOJMERAC FOR HELPING TO LIBERATE FRANCE DURING WORLD WAR II

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize John Gojmerac, an American World War II war hero, who will be receiving the highest French military honor, the National Order of the Legion of Honor, for his service in liberating France during World War II.

John Gojmerac was born in Croatia and he and his family moved to the United States when World War II broke out for fear that their home had become unsafe. Drafted into the Army in 1943, John was required to serve as a field telephone installer, first scout, and combat infantryman. Over the course of World War II, John nearly died three times. During his recovery from surgery after a nearby mortar shell explosion sent shrapnel into his shoulder, the war in Europe finally ended. After a long and hard-fought war, John was able to come home to the United States where he would later marry his wife, Jean Gojmerac (née Roberts), and settle down in Tonawanda, New York.

For his service, John Gojmerac received a Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, and several other medals for saving lives during the key battles of World War II. During his time in the Army, John fought throughout France, Italy, and Germany. At 99 years of age, John will finally be receiving the Legion of Honor Medal from the French government for his part in the liberation of France.

I want to invite all present to join me in thanking John Gojmerac for his service to both the United States and France and congratulate him on receiving the recognition that he deserves.

RECOGNIZING LUIS MOLINA-
BARRAZA

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Luis Molina-Barraza of Westminster, Colorado for receiving the United States Department of State Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. As part of this prestigious honor, Luis traveled to Morocco to study abroad.

U.S. Study Abroad programs are an important component of the federal government's efforts to ensure Americans of all backgrounds have the opportunity to gain global experiences and work across our borders to help address our world's greatest challenges. The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship provides exceptional undergraduate students with the opportunity to expand their cultural proficiencies, study critical need languages, and conduct STEM research. The scholarship has empowered over 41,000 individuals with financial need to engage in people-to-people diplomacy and prepare for distinguished careers in public service.

I commend Luis for pursuing an exemplary international education and representing America abroad as a citizen ambassador. This scholarship rightly recognizes a commitment to academic excellence. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is a privilege to recognize Luis' many accomplishments.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: TARA BEASLEY-
STANSBERRY

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Tara Beasley-Stansberry as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Tara is a dedicated public servant, community leader, and businesswoman who has touched the lives of countless members of her community. Tara holds leadership positions in a variety of local organizations including the City of Vallejo's Planning Commission, Housing First Solano, Black Women Organized for Political Action, the Veterans Resource Program, the Vallejo Police Department's Chief Advisory Board, and the Vallejo Center for the Arts. She is also the co-founder and CEO of the local restaurant, Noonie's Place, that partnered with the Small Business Development Center to feed hundreds of essential workers, first responders, and unhoused individuals. She also worked with the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund to develop a revolving loan fund program to benefit small businesses in Vallejo. Tara is known to be a fierce advocate for underserved communities and has continuously demonstrated her dedication to uplifting people throughout Solano County.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to

honor and recognize Tara Beasley-Stansberry for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING CAROLINA WASSMER
FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Carolina Wassmer is a civic engagement specialist with over a decade of experience. Born and raised in Orlando, Carolina is the daughter of two immigrants who taught her the importance of education and hard work. Carolina received her master's degree in business administration from Herzing University and her bachelor's degree in political science with a focus on international relations from the University of Central Florida. She also has an associate degree from Valencia College. She has dedicated her career to serving Central Florida.

Carolina currently serves as the Florida state program director for Poder Latinx. Her diligent work is seen across Florida's Ninth Congressional District as well as throughout the state of Florida through her leadership on civic engagement and advocacy efforts around economic, environmental, and immigrant justice in the Latinx community. She previously served as a civic engagement specialist at UnidosUS, running Florida's largest Hispanic voter registration program in 2020. In 2018, she organized political efforts in Florida's Seventh Congressional District. In 2016, Carolina worked as a civic engagement coordinator with the Hispanic Federation, where she developed and implemented their first Central Florida-based voter registration program.

Carolina has dedicated her career to increasing Latinx participation in the American political process by expanding the electorate and empowering Latinos. Her passion is focused on developing and maintaining strong relationships with allies, stakeholders, and policymakers at both grassroots and grassstops levels. Carolina sees herself building the next generation of Latinx leaders to continue spreading the message of the importance of turning out on Election Day and showing up for the community every day.

DINO-BOTS

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I want to honor the achievements of the Dino-bots, a robotics team who developed a system nicknamed "The Coolinator". The Dino-bots recognized that thermo-electric plants require cooling to operate safely and efficiently, but the water used for cooling is returned to its source fifteen degrees warmer than before. They proposed an idea that nuclear power plants using a once-through cooling system build a pipe system that allows the water to journey twenty feet underground where a heat transfer will take place, resulting in a 7.5 de-

gree Fahrenheit cooling on the water exiting the thermo-electric plants back to its source. After consulting with a scientist from NOAA, it was concluded that this proposal would improve biodiversity and result in a major positive impact. The Dino-bots developed this idea while participating in the annual robotics competition hosted by First Lego League and were selected to move on to the Mid Atlantic Innovation Project Competition. The Dino-bots are actively searching for energy solutions for our Nation, and I am very proud of them for all their accomplishments. God Bless the Dino-bots, and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: SENATOR NANCY
SKINNER

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Senator Nancy Skinner as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Nancy's public service began as a student when she was elected to the Berkeley City Council. She was a co-founder of the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives—Local Governments for Sustainability and remains a clean energy and climate change trailblazer. She was the U.S. director of The Climate Group, an international nonprofit organization that works with both private and public sector leaders to address climate change. She also served on the board for the East Bay Regional Park District and was involved with the East Bay Women's Political Caucus supporting women running for elected office. In 2008, Nancy was elected to the California State Assembly where she represented the 15th Assembly District for three terms. Elected in 2016, Nancy now represents the people of California's 9th State Senatorial District. She is chair of the Senate's Budget and Fiscal Review Committee and the California Legislative Women's Caucus. Throughout her years in public office, Nancy has authored and supported bills addressing social justice, climate change, education, gun violence, and countless other critical issues.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Senator Nancy Skinner for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING CARLOS ACUÑA FOR
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Carlos Acuña, a Colombian by birth, is a seasoned attorney with 15 years of legal experience who has made a significant impact on the Hispanic community in Orlando, Florida. As the founder and director of Acuña-Araujo

Law, he has been an unwavering source of support for his community.

A decade ago, Carlos chose Orlando as his home and established Acuña-Araujo Law, with a clear mission: to assist the Colombian and Hispanic communities. His firm has become a beacon of hope, enabling community members to address legal matters in Colombia without the need for travel. His passionate commitment to defending the rights and well-being of his clients has earned him their trust.

Carlos Acuña also serves as the president of the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce in Orlando. Under his leadership, the organization has worked tirelessly to strengthen trade and cultural ties between Colombia and the United States in the region. He has promoted business collaboration and economic growth, benefiting Colombian and American entrepreneurs alike.

In addition to his achievements in the legal and business fields, Carlos has dedicated himself to serving the Hispanic community in Orlando during his 10-year tenure in the city. He has offered free legal advice to those facing challenges, demonstrating his commitment to social justice and support for those in need.

His passion for the community and dedication to justice have made him an exemplary community leader. Carlos not only works within the Chamber of Commerce but also actively engages in activities that promote Colombian and Hispanic culture in Orlando, proudly sharing the richness of his heritage.

In summary, Carlos Acuña is a Colombian attorney with an outstanding legal career and a deep commitment to the Hispanic community in Orlando, Florida. His leadership in the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce, his passion for justice, and his solidarity with the community make him a role model and tireless advocate for the rights and well-being of those around him. His legacy will endure as a beacon of hope and support in Central Florida.

DIANNE GOVE

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is my pleasure to recognize and honor the illustrious career of Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove who has dedicated her life to serving our South Jersey community. DiAnne's journey began with a strong educational foundation. After graduating from Southern Regional High School, she pursued her passion for teaching, earning degrees in Social Science from Cabrini University and Monmouth University. For an impressive 32 years, she dedicated herself to educating and inspiring students, and her exceptional commitment earned her the well-deserved distinction of High School Teacher of the Year in 1992.

In 1984, DiAnne was appointed to complete the term of a former Commissioner in Long Beach Township. Her dedication and leadership were evident, as she was elected to a full term the following year. DiAnne has also served in various community roles, including

as an Eucharistic Minister and Lector at St. Francis parish and as a board member of the Southern Ocean County Hospital and the Ocean County Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. In 2003, DiAnne was called upon once again to serve her community, filling a vacancy as Mayor and Commissioner. She was subsequently elected to a fall term and served as President of the Ocean County Mayor's Association. In 2009, DiAnne's commitment to public service led her to the General Assembly, where she was selected to fill a vacant seat, and was reelected many times since. She is a champion of veteran's issues and she authored the "Veterans' Business Assistance Act," a bill that supports veteran-owned businesses that was signed into law in 2011. Because of her dedication, she has been recognized with awards such as the Southern Ocean County Women of Achievement award and the VFW Legislator of the Year.

I thank her for her lifelong commitment and service to her community and to the people of South Jersey. God Bless Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove, and God Bless our United States of America.

CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAMPA DIVISION OF VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to congratulate the nationally renowned Tampa division of Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) and the Veteran Mentor Program on their 10th anniversary. It is my honor to express my deep appreciation for this incredible milestone and for the impact that this team of mentors, judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys continues to have on helping veterans to recover from challenging times and the criminal justice system.

Started in 2013 by retired U.S. Army Colonel DJ Reyes, the Tampa VTC was formed to approach and mitigate the gap on many veteran requirements and needs often unavailable by the courts, local government or community services. Furthermore, the initiative seeks to build a platform to support, advocate and train veterans who find themselves in trouble with the law due to substance abuse disorders or conditions incurred during military service.

The Tampa VTC launched with six veterans and one mentor. Limited to about 25 veterans at any time and created with existing resources without additional funding from the county, state or federal government. The Tampa VTC soon overcame adversities, such as no additional funding or staff, to provide support to this vulnerable community. The initiative established strong roots and the trust of the community grew. It now operates with a consistent budget and small judiciary support staff. I am proud of the more than 900 veterans who graduated over the last 10 years and of Tampa VTC's graduation rate of 88 to 92 percent, making it one of the most suc-

cessful among the 623 divisions throughout the Nation. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic and other legal procedure issues, when numbers decreased, 50 mentors are actively serving and around 60 veteran defendants are on the docket. In addition, with the passage of the Veteran Treatment Court Coordination Act, the Tampa VTC was able to access grants and technical assistance from the Department of Justice.

I would also like to honor two Tampa Bay veteran leaders for their unwavering dedication to serving our community: Retired U.S. Army Colonel DJ Reyes and the Honorable Judge Michael J. Scionti. Colonel Reyes and his contributions, commitment and invaluable work with the Tampa VTC have shined light in the life of many of my neighbors. Judge Scionti, a highly decorated military officer and advocate for this vulnerable community, brings his own military experience to the bench to help address the unique challenges that our veteran community faces with a fair and impartial administration of justice. I am proud to have Colonel Reyes and Judge Scionti as allies in our commitment to improving the quality of life for those who sacrificed so much for our country. They exemplify the spirit of public service and represent the best of Florida.

Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to the service of the Tampa division of Veteran Treatment Court and its passionate leader, Colonel DJ Reyes, for their meaningful contributions to ensure no veteran is left behind. I want to congratulate this courageous organization on its 10th anniversary of public service and offer my sincerest wishes to their future.

COMMEMORATING TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE BELL ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF INTEX

HON. LANCE GOODEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GOODEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise to commemorate the extraordinary service of Texas State Representative Gregory Keith Bell from Forney, Texas, and his company, Intex Electrical Contractors, founded in 1983 when Mr. Bell was the young age of twenty-one. Rep. Bell continues to serve as President and CEO of Intex, working with an outstanding leadership team.

Due to the extraordinary effort of Rep. Bell, Intex is celebrating its 40th anniversary serving the Metroplex. The company has received numerous awards for its excellent work and has been recognized as one of the top one hundred fastest-growing private companies in North Texas. The leadership team brings over two hundred years of industry experience. Intex is a Certified Minority Business Enterprise and was ranked Top Specialty Contractor in 2005. I am proud to represent Rep. Bell, his family, and the team at Intex in Washington, and I am proud he represents my family and me in Austin.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: PIPPIN DEW

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore. I rise to recognize the contributions of Pippin Dew as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Pippin has been a realtor in the North and East Bay Areas for the last 16 years where she has gotten to know the needs of her community. She is currently President of Vallejo Main Street, an organization aimed at revitalizing the downtown area. She is President Elect of the Solano Association of Realtors and serves on the Executive Board for the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce as Chair of the Government Affairs Committee. She also served as a member of the Vallejo City Council for 9 years and is a past president of the North Bay Division for the League of California Cities. During her time on the city council, some of her many proud accomplishments included the creation of an early learning center in southern Vallejo and the creation of the first family service center of its kind in Solano County. In 2023, Pippin was appointed by Governor Newsom to the board of directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority where she helps ensure the community's continued access to a robust ferry service. Pippin is known for the dedication and enthusiasm she brings to public service and her unwavering support for the Vallejo community.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Pippin Dew for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING YIMELDA A. GOSHEA
MARTINEZ FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE
MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Yimelda A. Goshea Martinez was born in the Dominican Republic. She immigrated to the United States in 1992 and has lived in Central Florida for the past 24 years. Her life has been defined by a deep commitment to community service, faith, and education and she has dedicated herself to making a positive impact on her community. As a founding member of the Osceola Latin Lions Club, she has played a pivotal role in organizing numerous charitable events, from fundraising for vision care programs to volunteering at local food drives.

Her devotion to her faith is equally inspiring. For several years, she has been an active volunteer at Holy Cross Catholic Church, leading children's ministry and dedicating her time and energy to various programs and community initiatives. This includes volunteer work in the local school district helping new Spanish-speaking migrant children acclimate to the United States.

One of Yimelda's most notable achievements is her involvement with "Help Now" in Kissimmee, Florida. As a volunteer, she has helped advance the nonprofit's mission to assist individuals and families facing adversity by providing essential resources including food, clothing, and shelter, and ensuring that people receive the assistance they desperately need.

In addition to her community involvement, Yimelda graduated from Ana G. Mendez University in June of 2023, where she pursued a degree in social work. Her education has equipped her with the knowledge and skills needed to make an even greater impact on her community.

Whether it's helping to organize youth events, providing support to elderly members, or organizing supply drives to send back to needy families in the Dominican Republic, Yimelda's faith-driven service has touched the lives of many Central Floridians. Her life story is a testament to the power of compassion, dedication, and education. Her work with the Lions Club, her service to her church, and her contributions to "Help Now" demonstrate her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others.

Yimelda has been a real estate agent for 25 years and now does clinical social work. She lives in Central Florida with her beloved husband and three cherished children.

DANIELLE HONG

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today is my honor to bring attention to the courage and strength of Danielle Hong, a woman who fights to bring awareness to Tracheal Bronchial Malacia. At the age of 18, she was diagnosed with asthma after she noticed her lung capacity was quickly deteriorating. After a series of tests and treatment, her condition only seemed to get worse. It wasn't until she visited the professionals at South Jersey Chest Diseases in Hammonton, South Jersey did they discover that she was misdiagnosed. Her illness, Tracheal Bronchial Malacia is commonly mistaken for asthma and because of this, often goes untreated. Following proper treatment, Danielle now has zero airway collapse. Danielle fights every day to bring attention to this pressing medical condition, so others don't have to suffer as she did. Now, she works at a local hospital in South Jersey and continues to educate and bring awareness to our South Jersey community.

I thank her for her public service and dedication to this important issue. God Bless Danielle Hong, and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING WHITE CANE
AWARENESS DAY

HON. NATHANIEL MORAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize White Cane Awareness Day.

White Cane Awareness Day, celebrated annually on October 15th, serves as a powerful reminder of the significance and empowerment that the white cane symbolizes for individuals with visual impairments. This day raises needed awareness of the challenges faced by the blind and visually impaired community, while also highlighting their remarkable achievements and contributions to our society.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing White Cane Awareness Day and honor the achievements of individuals who inspire us with their resilience, their strength, and their spirit.

RECOGNIZING BOBETTE FRANKLIN

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to honor Bobette Franklin upon her retirement from a 29-year career in the United States Congress assisting Kentuckians with the federal government processes.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Bobette, a Bowling Green native, over 30 years ago. As a staff member for my predecessor, she developed a passion for advocating for Kentuckians who had challenges with federal agencies and quickly gained the respect of many in Kentucky's Second District, especially among veterans and their families. When I was sworn in, I knew it was critical to keep her enthusiasm, knowledge, and earned constituent trust on my team. Two years later, Bobette departed my office to become Director of Constituent Services for Senator RAND PAUL, which allowed her to share her passion for public service across the Commonwealth.

In November, Bobette will be retiring after nearly three decades of service to Kentuckians. I offer my deepest gratitude to Bobette for her service and wish her happiness as she spends her retirement with her husband, Steven, and her son Noah.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: MAYOR PRO TEM
PRINCESS WASHINGTON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Mayor Pro Tem Princess Washington as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Princess is a member of Suisun City's City Council and their youngest ever Mayor Pro Tem. She is known by many as a leader, artist, and passionate advocate who has found countless ways to give back to her community. Professionally, Princess is a licensed Pharmacy Technician working for Kaiser Permanente as well as an accomplished playwright and documentarian. She is a dedicated advocate for preserving the arts, the environment, and local business. Princess currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Fairfield-Suisun Rotary Club where she was

named Rotarian of the Year and received recognition from the Fairfield Suisun Chamber of Commerce. She is also Chair of the Solano County Sierra Club and has dedicated her time to protecting the Suisun Marsh as a member of the Solano Land Trust's Conservation Committee. Additionally, Princess is a generous and dedicated volunteer for Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank of Solano and Contra Costa Counties and Vice-Chair of The Salvation Army of Solano County Advisory Board. With every organization where she gives her time, Princess has worked tirelessly to provide for her fellow community members.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Princess Washington for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING VICTOR JOSE SANCHEZ
FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Victor Jose Sanchez was born on July 24, 1974, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and moved to Florida in 2002. Victor has been married to his wife, Elizabeth, for 21 years and has an 18-year-old daughter named Nicole. Victor has also worked for the United States Postal Service for 21 years. He is a member of the American Postal Worker Union and a steward, assistant clerk craft director, and Florida District 5 business agent.

In 2009, Victor organized and opened the Central Florida Labor Council for Latin American Advancement Chapter along with others. Victor has been the president of the LCLAA since 2009. LCLAA was formed by a group of Latino/a trade unionists in 1973 and has become the leading advocacy group for Latino/a working rights in the country. LCLAA was born out of the need to educate, organize, and mobilize Latino/as in the labor movement, and has expanded its influence to organize Latino/as to impact workers' rights and the political process.

Victor engages in voter education and registrations, get-out-the-vote campaigns, immigration, Latina equal pay efforts, environmental justice, labor rights, civic engagement, and civil rights. No matter the distance, he joins other unions, non-profit organizations, and union members in the fight for representation against large companies that exploit workers. Victor is committed to working with all independent sisters and brothers, trade unions, and others in Central Florida to improve the conditions of Latino workers and their families.

As the president and delegate of the LCLAA, he worked relentlessly during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure Latino/a families received the protections and support they needed. Victor continues fighting for the rights of undocumented immigrants who are vital to our economic recovery and live in fear due to the outdated and inhumane immigration system.

Victor continually mobilizes members and community partners to advocate for social and economic justice, and he strives daily to defeat oppression and assist in making commu-

nities better for all people regardless of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, or ethnic or national origin.

COOPER KANE

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, this April, I had the pleasure of attending Cooper Kane's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Cooper entered scouting at the age of six and immediately felt at home with his troop. He participated in the National Youth Leadership Training through the Scouts which ignited his passion for leadership. He soon after became a staff member and participated in the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience in New Mexico. For his final step in completing his rank of Eagle Scout, Cooper built a gaga pit, which is an outdoor group ball game, for the Ventnor Middle School students to enjoy. Cooper will be attending the University of Alabama in the fall and will be pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Cooper should be proud of his achievements with the Boy Scouts, and it was my honor to attend his Eagle Scout Court of Honor. God Bless Cooper, and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING THE LIFE OF KAREN
MCGINNIS

HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I rise to recognize Karen McGinnis, a dedicated leader hailing from Central Washington, who tragically lost her fight to cancer this past month. In 2018, I stood where I am now to praise Karen for her passion for worker safety, and it saddens me that rather than announcing her next great achievement, I'm instead mourning her life.

Karen McGinnis graduated from Washington State University with a degree in agriculture economics and was the founding leader of the Volpentest HAMMER Federal Training Center near Richland, Washington. Her legacy includes growing the HAMMER Center into a world-class training facility for Hanford workers and other federal employees, where she instructed them on emergency response and promoted a culture of safety on the job.

Her ability to build the Center into a training facility—not only for domestic workers, but also for international partners—was legendary. In fact, she received the Special Achievement Award for outstanding leadership in furthering the DOE's Voluntary Protection Program. After 40 years of hard work alongside Hanford, she retired in 2018, but her legacy continued.

Karen was a fearless advocate for her workers, a natural leader, and a friend. While she will be missed, her legacy will continue in the great (and safe) work performed at the Hanford Site each and every day.

RECOGNIZING RETIRED U.S. ARMY COLONEL AND PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF LACKAWANNA COLLEGE MARK VOLK'S LIFE-LONG DEVOTION TO SELFLESS SERVICE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I recognize the distinguished career of Retired U.S. Army Colonel and President Emeritus of Lackawanna College Mark Volk, a true hero of Northeast Pennsylvania, who has dedicated over four decades of his life to selfless service. While Colonel Volk's military career is marked with honor and valor, it is his profound contributions to Lackawanna College that I wish to recognize upon his well-deserved retirement.

Colonel Volk's military journey spans 26 years, a testament to his unwavering commitment to duty and service. His military career included 13 years in Field Artillery and an additional 13 years in Military Intelligence. During this time, Colonel Volk held various staff and command positions, both in the United States and Germany, gaining expertise and honing his leadership skills.

While serving as the Chief of the Strategic Leadership Division in the Army Strategy, Plans and Policy Directorate (G3) at the Pentagon, his office was in the wing impacted by the plane during the tragic events of September 11, 2001. For his heroic efforts and life-saving actions immediately following the attack on the Pentagon, he was awarded the Soldier's Medal, the Army's highest non-combat award for heroism. Additional military awards earned by Colonel Volk include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal and the NATO Medal.

Upon his retirement from the military on January 1, 2004, Colonel Volk returned to NEPA and embarked on another chapter of service, this time in the field of education at Lackawanna College. Over the course of 16 remarkable years his tenure was distinguished by remarkable achievements, serving as the executive vice president from 2006 to 2012 and vice president for operations and plans from 2005 to 2006 prior to taking over as president in July 2012 until his retirement in 2020. Under his leadership, the college introduced online courses and degrees, offered baccalaureate degrees, established a nursing program and expanded with new extension centers. It is a testament to his dedication and leadership that the college was ranked as the fastest-growing private college or university, with enrollments of 500 or more students during his presidency.

Perhaps his most enduring legacy is his belief in the potential of individuals from all walks of life. In his eyes, greatness is not reserved for the few: He firmly believes that everyone has the capacity to be a force for positive change in a world that yearns for it. His optimism is contagious, and his unwavering faith in the region, families, and students of NEPA has left an indelible mark.

Colonel Mark Volk, and his wife Lynn, continue to be active and generous members of our community, giving their time and energy to numerous organizations. Their dedication to service has set a shining example for us all. I commend Colonel Volk for his unwavering commitment to our community and our Nation; he truly represents the very best of Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING CORPORAL SCOTT
GILLEY

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to thank Corporal Scott Gilley for his service with the Eules Police Department and to congratulate him on his retirement. Corporal Gilley has spent 28 years as an officer with Eules PD protecting his community and countless North Texans. I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation for his selfless service.

Before pursuing his aspirations to become a police officer, Scott served in the United States Coast Guard for 8 years. After attaining an Honorable Discharge, he was hired as a Eules Police Officer in 1995. His primary assignment with the department was working as a senior member in the patrol division. Scott's leadership and work has had a significant impact leading many of his fellow officers on to very successful careers due to his mentorship. Over his many years of service, Scott has received four police certifications, his Corporal rank, and a variety of police in-service training. He's used this knowledge to provide countless hours of police training to other officers and mentor new ones straight from the academy.

During his time with Eules PD, Scott has received 40 police commendations in which he was commended for his service and professionalism to the department and community. It has always been my view that public service is among the most admirable of callings, one that demands the very best among us to tackle monumental challenges in the name of selfless service to others. Corporal Gilley has always been known and appreciated as an "informal leader" of the troops and one that can be counted on in any situation. The courage and dedication he displayed during his many years of service in both the United States Military and Eules Police Department is admirable, and Texas-24 is better for having the benefit of leadership.

It is my honor to congratulate Corporal Scott Gilley on his successful career and retirement.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: RHONDA ROCHON
SMITH

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Rhonda Rochon Smith as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Described as passionate, charismatic, compassionate, and driven by her colleagues and fellow community members, Rhonda is a dedicated community servant involved with numerous non-profits, committees and advocacy groups throughout our district. As the Program Manager at the Center for Volunteer & Non-Profit Leadership, Rhonda facilitates the advancement of nonprofits and volunteerism by strengthening leadership, encouraging innovation, and empowering individuals in Solano County. She is also the Volunteer Services Manager for Contra Costa Regional Medical Center where she plays an integral role in placing volunteers in the hospital to enhance the quality of patient care. Outside of these roles, Rhonda serves on the Board of Directors of the Solano County Fair Association, Vallejo Police Oversight and Accountability Commission, and is Vice-Chair of the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation. She is also an active member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the Vallejo NAACP, and Black Women Organized for Political Action. Rhonda works every day to serve her community and inspires others with her commitment to making positive change wherever she goes.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Rhonda Rochon Smith for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING YARITZA PEREZ FOR
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Yaritza Perel graduated from Gateway High School in Kissimmee in May of 1999. In September of that year, she arrived on the world-famous yellow footprints of the Marine Corps recruit depot in Parris Island, South Carolina, graduating in December. After graduation, she was assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia for MOS training as a bulk fuel specialist. Upon graduation, she was sent to her first duty station at Camp Pendleton, California, and assigned to the First Marine Division, First Marine Expeditionary Force, Seventh Engineer Support Battalion, Bulk Fuel Company.

After the attacks on September 11, 2001, the Marine Corps shifted gears and began preparing for deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As part of the initial invasion, Bulk Fuel Company was attached to the Sixth Engineers Support Battalion. Six days into the war, Bulk Fuel Company completed the 57-mile hose reel tactical fuel system, capable of pumping fuel from the Kuwait-Iraq border to Logistics Support Area Viper. Setting up these fuel lines was crucial to providing all forward-moving units the capabilities to complete their mission and reach their targets. These efforts earned Yaritza's unit a Presidential Unit Citation.

On her second enlistment, Yaritza was assigned to COMUSMARCENT at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, where she served in an administrative role working in the G-1 and G-3 overseeing manpower operations and casualty accountability for all forward operating commands. Upon completing

those orders, she was sent back to the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, H&HS Squadron serving as Flight Line NCO conducting flight operations and fuel testing for all base operations.

Yaritza separated from the Marine Corps in 2013 and moved back to Orlando to be close to family. Since her return, Yaritza has been an active member of the community, learning to repurpose her service to the great state of Florida. Yaritza served as a platoon leader with The Mission Continues for over three years and completed over 50 community service projects in the Central Florida area. After Hurricane Maria, she went with The Mission Continues to Puerto Rico to help restore the El Morro National Monument. During her time volunteering, she found Moms Clean Air Force, a national nonprofit organization focused on cleaning the contaminated air across the state. As the state organizer for Florida, she has met with congressional leaders, legislators, and community leaders to make and change laws and regulations to ensure a cleaner healthier environment for future generations. As an environmental advocate, she was the voice for the voiceless and spoke on behalf of Floridians.

Currently, she works as an outreach specialist with the Wounded Warrior Project. In this role, she engages with veterans and their families to bring them out of the house and get them engaged with each other, our communities, and other resources that could aid them in their healing journey. Yaritza is responsible for empowering and inspiring post-9/11 veterans in Florida to re-establish themselves as positive contributors to their communities. She is also a proud mom.

CHRIS CONNORS

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today, I honor the unwavering dedication and remarkable milestones of State Senator Chris Connors throughout his career. His commitment to public service began with his election to the Lacey Township Committee in 1984, followed by his role as Mayor from 1986 to 1990. Senator Connors has also served as Director of the New Jersey Commission on Capital Budgeting and Planning, overseeing the state's capital budget and expenditure plans. Elected to the General Assembly in 1989, Senator Connors has been a champion for his constituents. He was subsequently elected to the Senate in 2007, and his contributions have been recognized through various honors and awards.

During my time as a state legislator, I had collaborated with Senator Chris Connors on several practical initiatives, such as establishing the Coastal New Jersey Evacuation Task Force to enhance the preparedness of coastal communities for natural disasters. Additionally, we fought diligently to secure South Jersey representation on the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the governing body responsible for overseeing the Garden State Parkway.

In addition to his political career, Senator Connors is an accomplished attorney, and he

remains a dedicated family man, married to his wife Deborah since 1979, and together they have two children. Senator Christopher J. Connors' unwavering dedication, notable achievements, and commitment to serving his community make him a true role model. Let us express our utmost respect and appreciation for his remarkable public service. God Bless Senator Chris Connors, and God Bless our United States of America.

RECOGNIZING MARIE HANDY

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Marie Handy of Lakewood, Colorado for receiving the United States Department of State Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. As part of this prestigious honor, Marie traveled to Japan to study abroad.

U.S. Study Abroad programs are an important component of the federal government's efforts to ensure Americans of all backgrounds have the opportunity to gain global experiences and work across our borders to help address our world's greatest challenges. The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship provides exceptional undergraduate students with the opportunity to expand their cultural proficiencies, study critical need languages, and conduct STEM research. The scholarship has empowered over 41,000 individuals with financial need to engage in people-to-people diplomacy and prepare for distinguished careers in public service.

I commend Marie for pursuing an exemplary international education and representing America abroad as a citizen ambassador. This scholarship rightly recognizes a commitment to academic excellence. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is a privilege to recognize Marie's many accomplishments.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: RUTHIE DINEEN

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Ruthie Dineen as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Ruthie is a compassionate and dedicated leader who works to improve her community through her work, talent, and volunteerism.

She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker as well as an accomplished pianist and composer. Ruthie is the current executive director of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts where she has led the organization with strategic vision since 2021. Colleagues describe her as a dedicated and passionate leader who has touched the lives of countless students and staff. Since taking the position, Ruthie has helped increase the funding for the East Bay Center from \$3.2M to \$4.2M and in doing so has helped raise wages for the Center's staff. Ruthie is also leading the Center's Strategic Plan, requiring organizational and cultural changes to the operation, doing so while maintaining high faculty and staff morale. Her work makes the school a more vibrant place for every student and helps many discover new talents and interests which may otherwise go unnoticed. Ruthie embodies the mission of the East Bay Center of the Performing Arts to engage with students in the community through the world of performance traditions.

She is also an active member of her community who has been involved in a number of initiatives including Healthy Richmond, the Invest in Youth Coalition, and the planning group for the Blueprint to Prevent Interpersonal Violence in Contra Costa County. In everything she does, Ruthie finds ways to bring positive change to her community.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Ruthie Dineen for her positive contributions to our community.

IAN MCKINNEY

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, last month, I had the honor of attending Ian McKinney's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Ian began his scouting experience as a Tiger Cub and after many years and transformative experiences, has now earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Throughout the years, Ian has gained valuable knowledge and useful skills, made possible by his participation in the merit badge program and his steady involvement with the troop. To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, Ian developed and built a community educational garden to enrich his school's STEM program, leaving a lasting impact on fellow and future classmates.

Ian's dedication to the Scouts has been admirable and he should be proud of all that he has achieved with them. God Bless Ian McKinney and God Bless the United States of America.

HONORING IRIS BATHSHEBA
RUEDA MARTINEZ FOR HISPANIC
HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Iris Bathsheba Rueda Martinez, a Mexican attorney, graduated from Universidad del Tepeyac, Mexico City, stands as a prominent figure within the Central Florida Hispanic community. Her illustrious career spans a remarkable 17-year tenure of service at the Consulates of Mexico in Orlando, Florida, and Fresno, California. Iris has dedicated her life to providing unwavering support and making a profound impact on the lives of her fellow Mexican compatriots living abroad while working closely with community organizations, legal experts, and government officials to address the unique needs of Mexican nationals living in the United States.

Born in the vibrant heart of Mexico City, Iris has ardently maintained a deep connection to her Hispanic cultural heritage throughout her life journey. Her commitment to the promotion and celebration of Hispanic heritage resonates in every facet of her existence, with deep gratitude for the guiding influence of her faith in God. Throughout her distinguished consular career, Iris played a determinate and indispensable role in delivering humanitarian, community, and legal assistance to Mexican citizens residing in Florida and California. She participated in projects that led to the protection of human rights of hundreds of Mexican countrymen believing always in the success of mutual international relations based on the power of diplomacy.

Beyond her consular duties and advocacy work, Iris takes immense pride in her roles as a devoted wife and mother to a cherished daughter. The bedrock of family values holds central importance in her life, with her family in Mexico serving as an unwavering pillar of support. One of Iris's deepest aspirations is to instill in her daughter an enduring love for her Mexican heritage and a profound sense of pride in her American birthright.

Currently, Iris lends her expertise and dedication to a distinguished international consultancy firm Lord and Lord Consulting, led by accomplished women. She plays a key role in the management of the relations between LATAM, the USA, and the communication with the U.S. federal government.

The selection of Iris as an honoree during Hispanic Heritage Month is a well-deserved recognition of her dedication and contribution to the promotion of the Hispanic community in the United States.