

New York with a Certificate of Recognition presented by Council Member Mathieu Eugene.

HONORING AUBRI ESTERS

HON. AYANNA PRESSLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ms. PRESSLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring and celebrating the life of Ms. Aubri Esters, an outspoken and beloved activist.

Aubri was a voice for the unheard. She was unabashed in sharing her story and her lived experiences to advocate for the wellbeing of those most marginalized, including other transgender individuals, people with disabilities, people with substance use disorders, and trauma survivors.

In addition to serving on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Harm Reduction Commission, Aubri co-founded the organization SIFMA Now!, a coalition dedicated to building public support for supervised consumption sites and other life-saving harm reduction efforts. Whether on the ground working directly with impacted communities or in the Massachusetts State House advocating for progressive health policies that center those most vulnerable, Aubri was committed to saving lives.

On Thursday, June 11th, our community lost a true activist leader, table shaker and accomplice in the fight for health care justice. Aubri will be missed dearly, but her legacy lives on in the policy she helped to create, in the hearts of her fellow activists, and in the minds of policy makers who she engaged and enlightened.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the life of Aubri Esters and her contributions to the Massachusetts 7th Congressional District. We remember Aubri with tremendous gratitude for her life-saving advocacy. May she forever rest in power.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THERESA CARRANO ARGENTO

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with the heaviest of hearts that I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of one of the pillars of New Haven's Italian-American community and my dear friend, Theresa Carrano Argento. She lived a long, full life and our community will not be the same without her.

One of six children, Theresa grew up in the Wooster Square neighborhood of New Haven. Her father owned a "specialty market," selling imported fruit from California—pears, oranges, and cherries, all individually wrapped in color-coded paper. Her mother was an immigrant from Italy. When the stock market crashed, her father nearly lost the store. Instead of folding as so many others had, her father found work, as did she and her siblings, and her mother was left to run the family business. It

was from these early life lessons that Theresa learned the true strength of family and community.

Theresa dedicated most of her adult life to preserving and celebrating the community and its members' shared Italian heritage. She was a founding member of the Saint Andrew's Ladies Auxiliary, the women's branch of one of New Haven's Italian-American Societies and an organization she led for decades before stepping down only a few short years ago. She was also a dedicated communicant of St. Michael's Church, Connecticut's oldest Italian church, organizing and supporting fundraisers and even serving as its bookkeeper for a time. She worked to revive the Columbus Day celebration in New Haven and was a constant presence at Wooster Square's annual Cherry Blossom Festival. She was a member, and often served in the leadership, of most of the Italian-American clubs and organizations in the community. Theresa understood the importance of preserving and sharing that culture and those traditions with new generations. She was, in a word, remarkable.

Theresa was a matriarch in the Wooster Square community, much like my own mother, Luisa. They were, in fact, great friends and it was a friendship that remained strong until my mother's passing just two years ago. Both Theresa and my mother were forces of nature in their own rights, and when they got together, there was no stopping them. It was at their feet that I learned the importance of community and it is on their shoulders that I stand today. I would not be who I am today without their influence so I will be forever grateful for their guidance and support.

Theresa was an extraordinary friend, mentor, and community leader. I like so many others consider myself fortunate to have known her. She was so much more than a friend—she was family. I am heartbroken at her loss, but I know her memory will live on. I extend my deepest sympathies to Theresa's daughters, Nettie and Francis, as well as her four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Throughout her life, she touched the lives of many and hers is a legacy that will continue to inspire both those who knew her and generations to come.

HONORING TOMMI PRITCHETT AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR PRIDE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Tommi Pritchett currently serves as the Director of Development and Kissimmee Program Manager for LGBTQ+ Center Orlando, Incorporated. She is a native of Central Florida, earned her Bachelor of Arts in English at Rollins College, and has received several certificates from the Edyth Bush Institute for Philanthropy and Non-profit Leadership.

Her journey in public service began in 2010 when she volunteered for a local non-profit organization's booth at the Gay Days Expo. She continued as a volunteer with Paws Care for two years as their marketing and events coordinator; to which she attributes her love of

event planning and fundraising. She went on to volunteer and then work for Orlando Fringe, the longest running Fringe festival in the United States, and transitioned to the LGBTQ+ Center in August 2018.

In addition to animals and the LGBTQ+ community, Tommi advocates for the arts, women, and BIPOC, among other underserved and underprivileged communities. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Central Florida Chapter and serves on the board of directors for LoveyLoaves Special Needs Rescue and Sanctuary. She is honored to be recognized as an LGBTQ+ Community Leader in Central Florida and is proud to serve such a diverse and deserving community. She owes much of her success to the mentors she has had along her professional journey, as well as the staff, board, and volunteers at The Center, her family and friends, and the great community leaders she feels privileged to work alongside. When she is not busy with her leadership and advocacy responsibilities, she enjoys spending time with her family, dogs, and recently discovered a passion for hydroponic gardening.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD CHAIR MARNY XIONG

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Ms. Marny Xiong, Chairwoman of the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education who passed away from COVID-19 at the age of 31 on Sunday, June 7, 2020. Ms. Xiong was a trailblazing young activist, community leader, and a dedicated advocate for young people and strong public schools. Gender equity and racial justice were the core values that defined her public service.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in political science and African and African-American studies, Ms. Xiong began working in the local nonprofit community. In 2017 she was elected to the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education, demonstrating strong advocacy to improve our public schools. She played an important role in building support necessary to pass a bond referendum in 2018 that directed needed additional funding to Saint Paul schools.

When Ms. Xiong became Chairwoman of the Board in January of this year, her leadership abilities became evident as she confronted dual crises of the district's first ever teachers' strike and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Xiong worked respectfully and collaboratively with Superintendent Joe Gothard and labor leaders to reach a successful resolution to the strike in early March. Only a short time later, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, she helped to steer the district's unprecedented transition to distance learning for more than 37,000 students. It is heartbreaking that this pandemic has now taken one of our community's rising leaders.

Ms. Xiong is survived by her parents, Mr. Zahoua Xiong and See Xiong, and her seven siblings: two sisters and five brothers, as well as two brothers-in-law, a sister-in-law, four nieces and nephews. Marny will be remembered as a caring community organizer, a

fierce fighter for all children and a selfless public servant. We mourn the loss of a young woman, a rising leader in our community. Her legacy is an inspiration to us all.

Please join me to celebrate the life of Ms. Marry Xiong and her work to create a brighter future for all students.

HONORING IOWA LAW ENFORCEMENT AS IOWANS OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, National Police Week is a time for Iowans and people across the U.S. to celebrate local law enforcement officers who serve and protect our communities, and to honor the fallen heroes who lost their lives in the line of duty. These brave men and women in uniform have dedicated their lives to essential public service, and some have given the ultimate sacrifice. The COVID-19 pandemic may delay public ceremonies to recognize these individuals, but we can still take time this week to remember those we have lost, share our support for their loved ones, and thank those who continue to serve.

Law enforcement officers do far more than safeguard our lives and property. Today, community policing involves officers working in partnership with organizations and neighborhoods to create safer spaces. Not only are police responding to calls for help and providing support on the street, they're also in our schools teaching kids how to make good choices so they can continue on a path toward success. There is no shortage of stories of officers from my district going above and beyond on the job.

In late March as the community closed up shop to slow the spread of COVID-19, the Creston Police Department covered its front doors and windows in a display of colorful paper hearts as a symbol of hope for Iowans during this trying time.

Earlier this month Des Moines Police Sgt. Paul Parizek spent National Teacher Appreciation

Week visiting multiple educators and school support staff at home and at work to thank them for their service to our kids. During the same stretch of time, Sgt. Andrew Phipps from Des Moines PD visited 90-year-old Earl, a fellow veteran, on his birthday to share in the socially distanced celebration.

Waukee Police Department's Sgt. Hector Arias and Officer Gilchrist have been lending a helping hand passing out free Waukee Community School District Grab & Go Meals and devices to help students participate in virtual learning from home.

Just before schools moved to distance learning this spring, Council Bluffs Police Chief Tim Carmody visited Mrs. Nickerson's class of first graders at Rue Elementary School to participate in the Read Across America Program. Having recently welcomed Officer Deana Roth and Officer Meghan Thomson to the force, Chief Carmody is now leading his team in important efforts like educating the public on how to identify and avoid door-to-door sales scams during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Our police officers' contributions to our community don't end at handing out meals and spending time in the classroom. Faced with the additional health risks presented by this pandemic, our police officers continue to exhibit honor and bravery by serving their neighbors. They go to work knowing they could come face-to-face with Coronavirus, and that it is only one of the challenges they encounter while on duty. Because of their dedication and sacrifice, it is my pleasure to honor members of central and southwest Iowa's law enforcement community by nominating them as our Iowans of the Week.

HONORING JUAN RODRIGUEZ AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR PRIDE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Juan has invested 19 years working in the HIV arena. In

2001, he promised his partner, who was dying from AIDS, that he would devote his life to helping individuals infected with HIV and to eradicating the disease.

In 2016, under the guidance and direction of Dr. Roberto Ortiz, Juan started Bliss CARES, a nonprofit organization in Orlando. The mission of Bliss CARES is to save lives by treating and preventing the spread of HIV, Hepatitis and STD's. They strive to serve every person who walks through their doors, regardless of ability to pay. Bliss CARES has provided FREE HIV, STD and Hepatitis testing and services to more than 1987 clients and has spent over \$1.8 million on their much-needed medical care.

While leading a caring, and results driven team, Juan has created 5 lifesaving programs for Central Florida. These include:

TRANSformation, a 7-part conversational educational program to assist the Transgender community and sponsors name changes for transgender persons interested in the process;

Sweet Dreams Emergency Housing, an innovative program created to help Transgender individuals have a safe place to sleep that includes services for mental health counseling and substance abuse;

the Bliss Health Insurance Subsidy Program, which grants lifesaving medical care to STD positive individuals without insurance and

the Bridge Program, which provides access to medical care, treatment, mental health, laboratory tests, vaccines, transportation, and grants copay assistance for medications and doctor's visits. The program was designed to provide comprehensive medical care to the uninsured and underinsured populations who have a STD or need preventive care.

Last, but not least, Juan's nonprofit grants free access to the PrEP and PEP-Program, one designed to provide immediate care for all individuals who believe they may have been exposed to the HIV virus. This program prevents HIV from entering the blood stream, thus reducing HIV cases in Central Florida.