

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
(USAID)

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we now know what a \$280 million investment in the presidential campaign will give you—the opportunity to totally destroy one of America's most important soft power institutions, that is the United States Agency for International Development.

What has happened over the last 17 days is an extraordinary display of contempt for the American government. If you think about this in totality, right off the start, all federal funding stopped. What does that mean to the programs that Americans depend upon? Programs that gave people access to health care, education, programs that funded valuable medical research and infrastructure programs. For what purpose was that done? Perhaps to set up the next step, which is the dismantling of extraordinarily important programs.

For me and for my wife, more than almost 58 years ago, we participated in a USAID program which at that time was just four years old. Set up by then-President Kennedy. We volunteered for a vaccination program. An effort created by the United Nations funded by the American government, through USAID, to eradicate smallpox. We spent a month in rural Ethiopia doing vaccinations. Then as our life moved on, we continued working to provide the necessary services so that people could survive.

The Food for Peace program, my wife Patti actually ran that when she was at USDA as an assistant administrator. The famine camps, we were there. We saw the children that were dying of starvation, and we saw when the American grain finally arrived. I remember clearly one evening at the famine camp in Ethiopia in the mid 1980's, a woman literally in rags picking up individual grains of wheat that had spilled from the bags. She was trying to fill a cup so that there would be enough food that she could take back to her children. They died that night of starvation.

The richest man in the world invested over \$250 million in a presidential campaign, and he was given the keys to the American government and the opportunity to destroy things that he didn't like. USAID is not only providing the necessary food to allow people to continue to live, but also to thrive. Programs, agricultural programs, economic development programs around the world. People that didn't have the opportunity were given it and they were given this opportunity by the generosity of the American people.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have is here is a billionaire Elon Musk, who has the greatest wealth of any individual in the world, who seems to think he has the right to destroy people's lives. Before Musk does this, Mr.

Speaker, before our president gives him the power to do that, I would ask Musk and President Trump to get on their private jets or get on Air Force One. I urge them to go to one of the famine camps in southern Sudan and hold a starving child in their arms. I urge Musk and Trump to look at the extended belly, the vacant stare, look at this child who cannot even to hold up their own head up and know that the American people have developed an emergency supplemental food program that can revive that child. And then and only then can they both come back and decide whether to put USAID into the wood chopper.

If Musk or President Trump have just a modicum of humanity or any sense of compassion, they would never ever have taken USAID and destroyed it. Mr. Speaker if President Trump and Musk had any sense that both of their actions are doing to the thousands, indeed, millions of people around the world they both would decide to reverse what they are both are doing to USAID.

There are other programs that are out there, and we will be talking about those programs. The Department of Education, labor department, giving the richest man in the world the keys to the U.S. Treasury? What is going on here? What information has been gathered? Where did that information go? What will it be used for? Who owns that information now, the U.S. Government or Elon Musk? These are serious questions that my colleagues and I will continue to raise.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN
HERO THOMAS PASKVAN

HON. BETH VAN DUYN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Ms. VAN DUYN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, 17-year-old Thomas Paskvan from Southlake. Thomas achieved remarkable success in the world of fiddling, securing another first-place victory at the 2025 Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Fiddle Showdown. He began his musical journey at the age of three with the violin, switching to the fiddle 10 years ago and immersing himself in the vibrant world of country tunes. His dedication paid off when he took home a \$2,500 scholarship, a coveted belt buckle, and an invitation to a one-day master class at the Texas Fiddle Clinic.

The competition offers a platform for young fiddlers to showcase their talents while keeping the tradition of Texas fiddling alive. Contestants are required to prepare a mix of fast-paced breakdowns, waltzes, and a tune of their choosing, demonstrating their versatility and musical prowess.

Beyond his accolades, Thomas finds value in the camaraderie and relaxed atmosphere of the competition that allows contestants to connect and enjoy the experience together. This sense of community, alongside his musical

achievements, highlights his talent and appreciation for the people and traditions that shaped his journey in the world of music.

I congratulate Thomas on his victory. I thank him for inspiring young musicians not only across our community, but the entire Lone Star State.

HONORING CORPORAL STEVEN
CROWLEY'S SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

HON. THOMAS R. SUOZZI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the extraordinary sacrifice of Corporal Steven Crowley, a United States Marine who, at the cost of his own life, valiantly safeguarded nearly 100 employees of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, on November 21, 1979. His legacy stands as a testament to the highest ideals of duty, courage, and selfless devotion to our Nation.

Born on March 27, 1959, Corporal Crowley was raised in Port Jefferson Station, New York, alongside his four brothers and three sisters. From an early age, his character and integrity were evident to all who knew him. Those in his community recognized in him a rare and noble spirit—one defined by kindness, strength, and an unwavering commitment to others. Eileen Carlson, the mother of his best friend, recalled him as the "neighborhood son," and his older brother Richard described him simply as "an excellent person." A gifted athlete, he excelled in cross-country running at Comsewogue High School, demonstrating the same perseverance that would later define his service in uniform.

In 1977, Corporal Crowley answered the call to serve, enlisting in the United States Marine Corps. He completed Marine Corps Recruit Training, earning the coveted title of Marine, and after two years stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, he was selected for the prestigious Marine Security Guard program, ultimately being assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad.

On November 21, 1979, disinformation regarding U.S. involvement in the siege of the Grand Mosque of Mecca sparked a violent uprising outside the embassy. As the situation escalated into an uncontrollable mob, Corporal Crowley remained at his post, steadfast in his duty. As waves of rioters arrived—hurling stones, scaling walls, and ultimately breaching the compound—he did not waver. The mob, armed and growing in number, launched direct assaults, set fire to embassy buildings, and pressed forward with deadly intent. Yet, in the face of overwhelming chaos, Corporal Crowley stood resolute, holding his post until he was tragically struck by sniper fire.

Because of his unwavering bravery, the embassy employees were able to reach safety. For his valor, Corporal Crowley was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal and

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Purple Heart. He now rests among America's heroes at Arlington National Cemetery.

Though 45 years have passed since that fateful day, his memory endures. His name and sacrifice have been immortalized: in 2006, the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group dedicated a classroom in his honor; in 2009, Steven J. Crowley Memorial Park was unveiled in the Town of Brookhaven, New York; and in 2023, the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group renamed its student barracks in tribute to his legacy.

Today, I urge my colleagues to reflect on the magnitude of his sacrifice. On behalf of a grateful community and a grateful Nation, we offer our deepest respect and gratitude to Corporal Steven Crowley. May his courage and dedication never be forgotten.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN
HERO JOE DEPINTO

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Joe DePinto. Joe has made a profound impact on North Texas through his leadership in business and community service. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, his career has been guided by his early lessons of discipline, strategy, and teamwork.

After serving as an officer in the U.S. Army's Field Artillery branch, Joe transitioned to the corporate world. As the CEO of Irving-based 7-Eleven, he led the company to achieve unprecedented growth and modernization, driving job creation and economic development in North Texas.

Beyond his corporate success, Joe has been a strong and consistent advocate for America's military families, veterans, and education. His leadership talents aren't limited to corporate boardrooms—Joe has held key roles with organizations like the Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund and the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation, working to improve the lives of many. In recognition of his selfless personal sacrifices and unwavering commitment to supporting our military and veterans, Joe recently received the Sam Johnson Defender of Freedom Award.

Joe's contributions reflect the values of service and leadership that make our North Texas community so special. Whether through corporate initiatives or personal advocacy, Joe continues to set an example of how business leaders can drive positive change.

HONORING PHILLIP AUSTIN

HON. GREG STANTON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life and legacy of Phillip Austin, who passed away on December 20, 2024, at the age of 73 years old. An Arizona trailblazer and a champion for the Latino community, Phil will continue to live on through the countless lives he positively impacted.

A fourth-generation Arizonan, Phil was born in Mesa, Arizona, on February 17, 1951, to Albert "Beto" & Margaret "Maggie" Austin, who devoted their lives to operating Albert's Market. From a young age, Beto and Maggie instilled in him and his six siblings the value of service and hard work.

After graduating from Brophy College Preparatory in 1969, Phil continued his studies at Santa Clara University and the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, where his passion for civil rights was ignited. Phil often reminisced about his days as a student activist, specifically recalling his arrest for joining a "sit-in" protest over the firing of Latino faculty.

His lifelong pursuit of justice continued back in Arizona where Phil served as Assistant Attorney General and Chief Counsel for the Arizona Attorney General Civil Rights Division for sixteen years. His service at the Attorney General's office was instrumental in the passage of Arizona's first fair housing legislation, anti-discrimination laws for the elderly and disabled, and initiatives fostering the development of dispute resolution and mediation programs throughout the state of Arizona.

Known by then as "Mr. Mesa," his passionate advocacy for the Latino community prompted him to establish the East Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, equipping innovative Hispanic entrepreneurs with the confidence and resources to achieve their highest aspirations.

In 1994, he opened his own legal practice in downtown Mesa, where he practiced transactional, employment, civil rights, and fair housing law. Phil was a dedicated public servant and a beacon of hope for immigrants. He would donate space in his law firm to strategize and combat harsh and damaging anti-immigrant policies like SB1070—a law that devastated many Latino families in Arizona. Phil also played a key role in establishing the Alston House Center for Peace and Justice, a community hub for services and social justice initiatives. These efforts led him to also establish the Latino PAC del Rio Salado, giving a platform to bright and aspiring Latino elected officials.

Phil devoted his life to forging a stronger path forward for our state, earning him countless awards and recognitions, including the Phoenix Jaycee's Three Outstanding Young Men Award, Valle de Sol's Exemplary Leadership Award, and the NAACP's Roy Wilkins Award. Phil donated his time often, sitting on several state and local advisory boards. He founded the Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens, the Albert D. Austin, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund, the Albert D. Austin Mariachi Academy to empower young people through music education and cultural enrichment, and the EVHCC's STEAM Scholars program. Arizona owes a debt of gratitude to Phil.

Phil will be remembered for his tender-hearted nature and being a loving friend, brother, father, husband, and Tata. He is survived by his beloved wife, Christy, and his beloved children Lela, Lt. Colonel Phillip A. Austin, Angelo Austin, State Representative Lorena Austin, and his beautiful grandchildren. I thank him. Godspeed.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN
HERO ANIRUDH MAZUMDER

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science senior, Anirudh Mazumder. Anirudh's desire to serve others began in childhood, inspired by summers spent with his grandparents, where he learned the power of community involvement. This early influence motivated him to work toward unlocking the potential of our North Texas community, including through participating in our Congressional Youth Advisory Council.

After witnessing a family member's struggle to find a kidney donor, Anirudh co-founded KidneyChain LLC to address the inefficiencies in organ matching, aiming to save lives by preventing organ waste, and he currently serves on the National Kidney Association's Advisory Committee. Anirudh later participated in the Colleyville Chamber of Commerce's Youth Leadership Program, where he noticed a decline in youth volunteerism, prompting him to launch his "Rise and Serve" initiative that has engaged nearly 100 young North Texans. To help build excitement and interest in public service, Anirudh created a website and podcast series featuring local leaders to showcase service opportunities and highlight success stories.

I thank Anirudh for his dedication to engaging North Texans in public service. Our community's future looks brighter than ever thanks to young leaders like him.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 14, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, the Hernando County School District has long been committed to providing high-quality education that prepares students for success in both academic and career pursuits. The district believes in the power of Career and Technical Education (CTE) to support students in achieving economic independence and contribute meaningfully to the community.

For its more than 23,000 students, the Hernando County School District offers a wide variety of CTE programs across 14 of the 16 career clusters identified by the Florida Department of Education. These programs provide students with a comprehensive education focused on technical, "soft" and industry specific skills in fields ranging from Healthcare, Information Technology, and Agriculture to Skilled Trades and Entrepreneurship. More than 86 percent of Hernando School's graduating seniors have participated in CTE programs, underscoring the district's commitment to introducing and expanding access to these rich and experiential courses that will inform students long after graduation.

A fundamental component of the growth and popularity of CTE in the school district is the