

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