

served as the Central Florida Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for the Gore/Lieberman campaign. More recently, Marytza Sanz was appointed by Governor Charlie Crist to serve on Florida's 2010 Statewide Complete Count Committee to ensure a comprehensive count of Florida's population during the 2010 Census.

I am happy to honor Marytza Sanz, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her accomplishments and service to the Central Florida Hispanic Community.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
MARISSA SALA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Marissa Salas for her dedicated civic engagement. Marissa is a leader in Central Florida who believes in equality and advocating for the rights of the LGBT community. She currently serves as the GLBT Statewide Caucus Campaign Director and President of the Rainbow Democrats of Orange County, Florida.

Marissa graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in Social Science and her Master's Degree in Urban Planning from Florida State University. During her career, she has served as a GIS Test Manager and Analyst for Geonetics, Inc. in Boston, MA, and as a Senior Project Director for Lopez and Cheung, Inc. in Tampa, FL.

Marissa has participated in several campaigns including as the Campaign and Political Director for John Alvarez in the 2012 Florida House of Representatives race in Brevard County. She is also the principle and owner of her own consulting firm, Marissa Salas Consulting. Her public policy research has been published by the New York Times, and used as reference material by the UCLA School of Law. Marissa has also received many awards, including the 2007 Civic Award from the Municipal League of King County.

I am happy to honor Marissa Sala, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for being a champion of equality and an inspiration to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MARIA ISABEL
BARAJAS-MARTINEZ

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize an amazing young woman named Maria Isabel Barajas-Martinez.

Maria was an active leader in the immigration reform movement since she was in high school. She graduated from Lake Region High School with high honors in 2009, where she was also the president of the National Spanish Honor Society. She went on to pursue her education at Polk State College and aspired to become a pediatrician. While attending Polk State College, Maria joined the local chapter of Students Working for Equal Rights. In May 2010 she founded a youth organization dedicated to community service called the Young American Dreamers.

With the help of her organization, Maria focused on raising funds to provide scholarships for high school students seeking a higher education. Maria and the Young American Dreamers committed themselves to helping their community. The Young American Dreamers adopted Lake Blue Park where they planted flowers and trees during its construction and participated in the yearly Martin Luther King Jr. parade in Winter Haven.

Maria was also a volunteer at Angels Care and at the Lakeland Regional Medical Center.

Every year, she organized her friends and family to participate in the National Kidney Foundation "Kidney Walk" around Lake Hollingsworth. She was a mentor and tutor at Snively Elementary School and an active member of her church, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Mission, where she was a member of the Youth Choir and Youth Group.

Although she was a U.S. Citizen by birth, Maria sympathized with the struggles of undocumented immigrants and dedicated her life to improving the lives of others. Until her untimely death in June of 2012, this outstanding young woman helped countless others through community service and activism.

I am happy to honor Maria Isabel Barajas-Martinez, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her selfless dedication to her community and her many accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
MARIA PADILLA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Maria Padilla, a champion of diversity within the Central Florida community. Maria is a well-respected journalist and currently serves as the editor of Orlando's oldest Spanish-language weekly newspaper, La Prensa.

Maria graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in English from Rutgers University. She also has a certificate in Hispanic Marketing Communications from Florida State University and graduated from the Leadership Orlando class in Fall of 2013. Maria broke new ground as a senior reporter covering diversity in Central Florida for the Orlando Sentinel in 1997. She later launched and headed El Sentinel, a new Spanish-language weekly newspaper and website. Maria also created *Viviendo*, a bilingual quarterly magazine. Her blog, *Orlando Latino*, was nominated best Latino blog in Central Florida by LATISM (Latinos in Social Media).

Maria has received numerous awards and acknowledgements for her contributions as a successful journalist. She received the National Association of Hispanic Publications award for a Multiple Series Article, was recognized multiple times for her work with the Orlando Sentinel, and was a finalist in the Knight-Wallace journalism awards. Maria is also a founding member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and was elected twice to their national Board of Directors.

I am happy to honor Maria Padilla, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her contributions to journalism and dedication to informing the Hispanic community on issues impacting their daily lives.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
LETICIA DIAZ

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a great leader in the Central Florida community.

A native of New Jersey, Leticia Diaz is one of the founding faculty at Barry University's Andreas School of Law and currently serves as Dean there. Before joining the full-time faculty, Dean Diaz pursued a full-time law practice while teaching part-time at the school. She practiced in the areas of personal injury, toxic torts, and workplace chemical exposure.

Dean Diaz attended law school at Rutgers University where she received the Merck Patent Scholarship and was recognized for academic achievement by the Association of Latin American Law Students. Before entering law school, she received her Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Rutgers University. She also

spent two years as a post-doctoral research chemist at Hoffman-LaRoche, where she primarily worked on the synthesis of anti-HIV compounds.

Dean Diaz teaches in the areas of torts, environmental law, toxic torts, and product liability. She is faculty advisor to the Hispanic Association of Law Students as well as the St. Thomas More Society. Her publications range from analysis of the FDA's role in consumer protection to environmental law and consumer health.

Dean Diaz invites leaders from around the country to the Central Florida area to discuss the important issues of the day. She also convenes meetings and events that bring together varying perspectives on issues that affect the Central Florida community. Central Florida is a better place for the leadership that Dean Diaz has provided.

I am happy to honor Leticia Diaz, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her service and her work to educate, train, and inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

IN RECOGNITION OF SAM
FALCONE, SR. FOR RECEIVING
THE 2013 "LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT"
AWARD FROM THE
ITALIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF LUZERNE COUNTY

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Sam Falcone, Sr., who received the 2013 Italian American Association of Luzerne County "Lifetime Achievement" Award. Sam has dedicated nearly 60 years to his family's local business, Falcone Beverage Co., which his father started along with Sam and his brothers, Raymond, Charles, Carmen, Leonard and Angelo.

Throughout his life Sam has been an outstanding American and active citizen in his community. He was one of the original founders of the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame and its first president. He has been involved with an array of charities including the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, YMCA, the American Red Cross, and he served on the board of the American Lung Association. He worked with many professional organizations such as the Better Business Bureau, the Chambers of Commerce in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton and the Greater Pittston Area, and he served as the vice-president of the Malt Beverage Distributing Association. Sam also actively worked to preserve the resources within his community by taking part in the Susquehanna River Watch and the Rails-to-Trails Riverfront Revitalization Committee.

Sam has lived in the city of Pittston his whole life and has devoted himself to the welfare of his hometown. A practicing Catholic, Sam attends St. Joseph Marelo Parish and is a Fourth Degree Member of the Knights of Columbus Council 372, Pittston. He also served on the Pittston Child Development Center's Advisory Council. Recently, Sam had the honor of being the Grand Marshal of the Pittston's annual Tomato Festival Parade. Today, I am proud to recognize Sam Falcone,

Sr.'s lifetime of achievement and service to his community.

RECOGNIZING PLEASANTON CITY COUNCIL MEMBER ABRAHAM SAENZ, JR.

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pleasanton City Council Member Abraham Saenz, Jr. for his 30 years of service to the city of Pleasanton and to the state of Texas.

Councilman Saenz, a Pleasanton native, is a remarkable and highly respected member of the community who has dedicated his career to promoting the quality of life for all residents of Pleasanton. First elected in 1983, Mr. Saenz has served the community as a Member, and now Senior Member, of the Council of Pleasanton.

During his tenure Mr. Saenz has been instrumental in implementing many city projects. Some of the most important include: paving roads throughout his district and other areas of the city, preparing the city to have an ample water supply for the next 50 years, improving infrastructure in the areas of drainage and wastewater collection, facilitated the construction of a sports complex for youth, and the construction of a new City Hall, Police Headquarters, Public Works Facility, Library, and Civic Center. More recently Mr. Saenz represented Pleasanton in Economic Issues with Atascosa County and has been at the forefront of planning initiatives to accommodate the exponential growth of the city due to Eagle Shale Oil and Gas Play.

Not only has Mr. Saenz held an esteemed and honorable career in the Council, he has devoted his life to his family, community, and country. After attending Pleasanton High School, Mr. Saenz joined the United States Air Force in 1952. While in the Air Force, Mr. Saenz fought in the Korean War and was honorably discharged in 1956. Upon his return to Pleasanton Mr. Saenz began working as a barber, becoming the sole proprietor of the City Barber Shop in 1971. In 1961 he married Ermelinda Gomez Saenz with whom he now has 5 children, 6 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored and pleased to have had this time to recognize Councilman Abraham Saenz Jr. on his career and community involvement. He has contributed his time, knowledge, and efforts to his community.

SERGEANT PATRICK C. HAWKINS

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Army Ranger Sergeant Patrick C. Hawkins from Carlisle, Pennsylvania who was killed in action on October 6, 2013 in Afghanistan.

Sgt. Hawkins was on his fourth tour in Afghanistan and serving as a rifleman, gun team leader and Ranger team leader when he was

killed by an Improvised Explosive Device in Kandahar Province. He was tending to another wounded Army Ranger when he died.

Sgt. Hawkins graduated from Carlisle High School in 2007 and went on to spend three years studying culinary arts part-time at Harrisburg Area Community College before enlisting in 2010. He is survived by his wife Brittanie, of Lansing, Kansas, and his parents, Roy and Sheila Hawkins, of Carlisle.

Mr. Speaker, Sgt. Hawkins was clearly following part of the Army Ranger creed which says "I will never leave a fallen comrade" when he gave his life for our country. Therefore, for his dedicated service and sacrifice to protect our great Nation, I commend Army Ranger Sergeant Patrick C. Hawkins.

RECOGNIZING MS. KRISTIN BECK FOR HER COURAGE AND SERVICE TO THE NATION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Ms. Kristin Beck, a decorated U.S. Navy SEAL who not only spent 20 years fighting for her country in uniform, but is now leading the charge for equal rights for transgender Americans. During the course of her distinguished military career, Kristin was known as Chris Beck, and served through 13 deployments in Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, including seven combat deployments, before retiring and coming out as the first openly transgender Navy SEAL. From fighting terrorists overseas to knocking down gender barriers at home, she is a true patriot and source of inspiration.

At the age of five, the young Chris Beck knew that he was different, being drawn to his sisters' feminine clothes and toys. The son of a socially conservative, dogmatically religious farmer, however, he was sent to a Christian school operated by televangelist Jerry Falwell and pushed into traditional masculine roles, such as playing football and riding motorcycles. Fifteen years later, Chris found his calling with the SEALs, the Navy's elite special operations force. He proved himself to be a courageous and much respected hero, while developing the deep bonds of brotherhood with his fellow SEALs. In between missions, though, when Chris had a little time to himself, he could not help but dress in women's clothes. Over the next two decades, he went on to serve on a tour with the counter-terrorism unit known as SEAL Team Six, famous for its harrowing missions and rescues, and earned the Bronze Star with "V," the Purple Heart, and other numerous honors.

In 2011, Chris retired from the military and embraced his true feminine identity as Kristin Beck. She started undergoing hormone therapy and physically transforming herself into a woman. With this metamorphosis came the decision to officially come out to the world. It began with replacing her LinkedIn profile picture with one of her dressed as a woman, and changing her name from "Chris Beck" to "Kristin Beck." On February 9, 2013, Kristin officially came out to the military in a press release, in which she stated that she "respectfully remained silent regarding her gender

identity" during the era of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and deeply desired to be "afforded the freedom to live in a manner consistent with her life-long gender awareness as a female."

With the pain of shrapnel, broken bones, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as reminders of a life of extraordinary military service, Kristin agreed to participate in a study of "resilience" by Dr. Anne Speckhard, a Washington-area psychologist and adjunct professor at Georgetown University Medical Center. An expert in the psychology of terrorism, Dr. Speckhard wanted to study how service members draw upon coping mechanisms to integrate the stresses and exhilarations of combat with their workday lives back home. What she found was the disjointed story of a woman coming into her own following a lifetime of military service and societal pressures. After more than 100 hours of interviews that often resembled psychotherapy, Kristin and Dr. Speckhard co-authored the book *Warrior Princess: A U.S. Navy SEAL's Journey to Coming Out Transgender*.

Kristin has embarked upon perhaps the greatest mission of her life: self-actualization. Since her return to civilian life, she has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the issues affecting both the transgender community and veterans. Kristin works closely with Healing Grounds, the non-profit organization she founded to support returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Healing Grounds lends therapeutic help to them by providing specialized training in landscaping and gardening to build a place of tranquility in their own backyards. In addition, she has two teenage boys from a previous marriage, and works as a Pentagon consultant.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Kristin Beck for her outstanding bravery and service to our nation. All her life, she has selflessly put duty and country ahead of her own needs. Kristin's story reminds us of the many daily struggles faced by transgender Americans and veterans alike, including the continued discrimination faced by transgender service members who must hide their identities in order to serve in the military. As she continues working to advance lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality and address the needs of veterans, I remain an ally in Congress and wish her the very best in her new life's mission.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 90TH BIRTHDAY OF OSCAR JACKSON MOONEY, JR.

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to honor Oscar Mooney, Jr., a distinguished Alabama veteran, on his 90th birthday.

Mr. Mooney was born on December 2, 1923 at home in Weogufka, Alabama. In 1943, Mr. Mooney enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a sergeant in the 16th Armored Division. The 16th Armored Division was instrumental in the liberation of Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Mr. Mooney has received the WWII Victory Medal, the American Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal with one bronze star and the Good Conduct Service