

When the store went out of business, Venessa had no choice but to go back to work at Walmart in 2005. Vanessa and other associates had concerns about scheduling and management's attitude toward the workers. Eventually, the store began to hire temporary workers instead of giving full time work to the current employees.

In 2009, Vanessa discovered the Organization United for Respect at Walmart or OUR Walmart. She became an "Our Walmart" member online but kept her membership private. In 2012, Vanessa went on strike at her store during the week of Black Friday. Vanessa returned back to work after going on strike with a new sense of dignity.

Vanessa became one of the main leaders for Our Walmart in Central Florida. In April 2013, Vanessa was fired from her position with Walmart in retaliation for her activism. She continues to advocate for workers' rights by sharing her own experiences.

I am happy to honor Vanessa Hall Ferreira, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her courage and commitment to workers' rights.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF MARCOS VILAR

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the career of Marcos Vilar. Mr. Vilar was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He moved to the United States at the age of 14 and has since lived in New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Washington, DC, Chicago, Tampa, and Orlando. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Maryland and a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Mr. Vilar worked as a teacher in Chicago, where he also was active in community work. During his tenure at Roberto Community Academy he was best known for working with at risk youth and developing arts and cultural programming into after school activities. He was also advisor for the Student Government body and a leader of the local reform movement at the school.

Mr. Vilar moved to Washington, DC in January of 2002, and there held several national leadership positions including National Field Director for the Que Nada Nos Detenga, voter registration campaign of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, Executive Director for America's Families United, National Political Director for SEIU, and National Field Director for Mi Familia Vota Education Fund.

Mr. Vilar's work as Executive Director for America's Families United was fundamental to the development of Catalyst, which has become the standard voter file database used by progressive organizations. He was also a founding member of the Catalyst Board of Managers.

As Political Director of SEIU, Mr. Vilar focused on improving member databases and was responsible for aggressively growing the COPE Fund, SEIU's Political Action Committee (PAC). During his two year tenure, the PAC doubled its annual income and became the largest PAC in the country.

As National Field Director for Mi Familia Vota Education Fund, Mr. Vilar led efforts to engage Latinos in the 2012 election cycle. He was instrumental in the development and success of the National Latino Civic Engagement Table, a coalition of national organizations working together to increase Latino civic participation in key states. In addition he oversaw the opening of Mi Familia Vota Education Fund operations in Texas and Florida in 2011 and 2012.

Vilar moved to Florida in 2012 and served as statewide coordinator for the Alliance for Citizenship, a national immigration reform campaign. He is now working as Statewide Field Director for Florida New Majority.

I am happy to honor Marcos Vilar, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his many accomplishments and contributions to his community.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF LUIS R. PASTRANA SILVA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Luis R. Pastrana Silva for his service to our country and to the Hispanic community in Central Florida.

Mr. Pastrana was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. He holds a B.B.A. from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Rio Piedras Campus, an M.B.A. from Farleigh Dickinson University, and a J.D. from the UPR School of Law. Mr. Pastrana honorably served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army for 20 years. After his retirement from the Army in 1978, Mr. Pastrana held several positions within the government of Puerto Rico, promoting business and economic development.

In 2001, he moved to Orlando to serve as the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration's Regional Director for Southern States. Since 2003, he has served as Distinguished Professor at the Ana G. Mendez University System in Orlando, FL. He is also a member of the Puerto Rico Bar, the American Bar Association, and the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Mr. Pastrana has been a leader in the Puerto Rican community in Central Florida and a champion for business development. He has published two autobiographies and one research book on the U.S. Constitution. He is happily married to Mareitssa Griggs, a college professor, and together they have five children and five grandchildren.

I am happy to honor Luis R. Pastrana Silva, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his service to our country and to the Hispanic community.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF LOVE OF JUANITA GARCÍA PERAZA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize the life and legacy of Juanita García Peraza, founder of the Congregación Mita Church.

Juanita García Peraza was born on June 24, 1897, in Hatillo, Puerto Rico. She came from a distinguished family, and was known for her moral and spiritual values, her love for the poor, and her sensitivity toward the pain of others. In the late 1930's, when Puerto Rico and the U.S. were experiencing a great economic crisis, Juanita became ill and was bed-ridden with gastroenteritis. While confined with the illness, Juanita promised the Lord that if He healed her, she would serve Him for the rest of her days. She was healed. She then abandoned her social position and fortune, and traveled the countryside visiting the poor and the needy to preach the good news.

In 1940, in the town of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, Juanita founded the Congregación Mita Church with a message of love, freedom, and unity. In 1947, the Church was established in the capital city of San Juan, in the Hato Rey sector. She performed missionary work, visiting prisons and hospitals and helping reform many alcoholics and drug addicts. In addition to her spiritual work, Juanita carried out extraordinary social work in the community. She

developed credit unions and corporations that provide employment and economic opportunities to members of the church. She established Bible schools, known as the "Consejero," to instruct, counsel, and guide children in their integral development. She founded music academies to benefit children and adolescents by encouraging their development in the arts. Also, she established the Ministry of Guards to watch over the church's properties and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Likewise, Juanita established the Ministry of Preachers and Deacons who perform social work wherever the congregation is established. She envisioned the creation of a shelter for the elderly and a school for the children and youth of the community, both of which became a reality a few years after she passed away. Under her leadership, her work spread to New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, as well as Santo Domingo and Santiago de los Caballeros in the Dominican Republic.

Juanita initiated a new era for women. At a time when women were not allowed to officiate in church and faced discrimination, she removed barriers and cleared the way for women to express themselves openly. Juanita allowed women equal participation in the church, including leadership roles. Despite being assailed, slandered, and misinterpreted, she pushed ahead bravely, leaving behind a legacy of love in the hearts of those who knew her.

In 1978, the Universidad Hispano Americana recognized Juanita for her extraordinary work, and awarded her the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Honoris Causae. A public elementary school in one of the communities where she served was also named in her honor.

I am happy to honor Juanita García Peraza, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for all her hard work, courage, and dedication.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,747,411,584,091.53. We've added \$6,120,534,535,178.45 to our debt in 4 years. This is \$6.1 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING CECILIA CASSIDY

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the outstanding contributions of Cecilia Cassidy and to commemorate her retirement after 21 years of service to the community of Rosslyn.

As executive director of Rosslyn Renaissance, Ms. Cassidy was crucial in growing the

member-based organization from a small core of volunteers to a respected business organization. Rosslyn Renaissance eventually merged with the Arlington Business Improvement District, BID, in 2012, and the majority of the programs Ms. Cassidy created while at Renaissance were implemented at the BID.

In 2003, Ms. Cassidy worked with property owners, the business community, the County Manager's Office and Arlington Economic Development to help create the Rosslyn Business Improvement District, BID. The first BID in Northern Virginia, Rosslyn BID was formed to enhance development and growth through highlighting the uniqueness and strengths of Arlington's Rosslyn neighborhood.

Her leadership as executive director of the BID paved the way for an influx of residential, retail, and dining offerings, which have transformed Rosslyn into a vibrant, dynamic, and more livable community. Today Rosslyn is a more walkable and drivable community; home to a number of award-winning living spaces.

Ms. Cassidy was instrumental in bringing Artisphere to Rosslyn. In order to make Arlington Counties' vision for Artisphere possible, BID pledged \$1 million in start-up revenue and \$300,000 annually for the life of the center. The state-of-the-art cultural center cemented Rosslyn as the cultural capital of Arlington.

Under the leadership of Ms. Cassidy, the Rosslyn BID garnered a number of awards including three from the International Downtown Association, one for urban placemaking for Central Space, and one in marketing for ROSSLYN magazine.

Ms. Cassidy has said that one of her proudest accomplishments as executive director of the BID was working with local partners to provide services for the homeless. Rosslyn BID is one of the only BIDs in the nation to provide homeless services.

A TRIBUTE TO WELCOME WILSON, SR.

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Welcome Wilson, Sr., who was named chairman of University of Houston's "Drive to Tier One" initiative. The University of Houston is on track for Tier One status. Mr. Wilson is a member of the Board of Regents at the University of Houston System. He was also inducted into the Texas Business Hall of Fame in 2010, served in the executive office of President John F. Kennedy, was Houston chairman for the March of Dimes, and graduated first in his class from the Naval Officers School.

Wilson will work to mobilize the community and alumni organization in support of the Tier One initiative. Elevating the University of Houston to one the Nation's elite research institutions would attract high-technology businesses seeking to form partnerships with universities and boost the economy of Houston and its surrounding area. Adding another top-tier university in Texas would also allow lower-income students to attend high-quality schools closer to home for less money.

Great universities are built by great communities. Mr. Wilson is a leader who represents

our community with distinction and honor. On behalf of all residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, it's an honor to recognize the appointment of Welcome Wilson, Sr., and I support Mr. Wilson and the University of Houston in their endeavors to achieve Tier One status.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TULSI GABBARD

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, on October 9, 2013, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 536 and 537. Had I been present I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 536: "no."—On Motion to Table the Motion to Appeal the Ruling of the Chair.
Rollcall No. 537: "no."—On Passage.

FOURTH U.S. POW DELEGATION TO JAPAN, OCTOBER 13-21, 2013

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor veterans from America's greatest generation and thank the Government of Japan for recognizing the sacrifices of these men. On Sunday, October 13, seven former members or widows of former members of the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Air Corps, and U.S. Marines who fought in the Pacific Theater of World War II—and who were once prisoners of war of Imperial Japan—will travel to Japan as guests of the Japanese government. Marking an act of historic reconciliation and remembrance, this is the fourth delegation of U.S. POWs to visit Japan through this program.

Their first trip to Japan was on aging freighters called "Hellships," where the men were loaded into suffocating holds with little space, water, food, or sanitation. The conditions in which they were held are unimaginable. At the POW camps in the Philippines, Japan and China, they suffered unmerciful abuse aggravated by the lack of food, medical care, clothing, and appropriate housing. Each POW also became a slave laborer at the mines, factories, and docks of some of Japan's largest companies. In the end, nearly 40 percent of the American POWs held by Japan perished; compared to two percent of those in Nazi Germany's POW camps. The POWs of this delegation slaved for Mitsubishi, Nippon Express, Sumitomo, Nisshin Flour, Hitachi, Dowa Holdings, and JFE Holdings.

In September 2010, the Japanese government delivered to the first American POW delegation an official, Cabinet-approved apology for the damage and suffering these men endured. Although the Japanese government had hosted POWs from the wartime Allies of the United States since the late 1990s, the 2010 trip was the first trip to Japan for American POWs. It was also the first official apology to any prisoners of war held by Japan.

I know that the American POWs fought hard for this recognition. Dr. Lester Tenney of California, a former POW who mined coal for

Mitsui, was instrumental in persuading the Government of Japan to offer the apology and initiate the trips of reconciliation. He says he is "honored to have had the opportunity of assisting the U.S. State Department and the Japanese Embassy in arranging this year's POW Visitation Program. Like the years past, the visit will no doubt yield many memories while at the same time erase many bad experiences that left its mark on the POWs. This year, for the first time, Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs has allowed three widows of former POWs to participate in the program and visit the sites of their husbands' Japanese prison camps located in various cities in Japan."

I thank the POWs for their persistent pursuit of justice, and commend the U.S. State Department for helping them. I also appreciate the willingness of the Japanese government to pursue an historic and meaningful apology. It is my hope that the POW Visitation Program continues to expand, and that it will be a healing mechanism for the POWs, their families and communities.

Now, it is time for the many Japanese companies that used POWs for slave labor during World War II to follow the example of their government by offering an apology and supporting programs for lasting remembrance and reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, I wish these men a fulfilling trip to Japan, and I hope that their trip contributes to securing the historic peace between the U.S. and our important ally Japan.

FOURTH U.S. POW DELEGATION TO JAPAN, OCTOBER 13-21, 2013

Phillip W. Coon, 94, is a full blood Muscogee Creek who grew up in Oklahoma. After graduating from the Haskell Institute (today's Haskell Indian Nations University) in Lawrence, Kansas, he enlisted in the U.S. Army on September 29, 1941. He was assigned to the 31st Infantry Regiment and sent immediately to the Philippines Islands aboard the USAT *Willard A. Holbrook* arriving on October 23, 1941. At Fort McKinley he trained as a .30 caliber machine gunner (M1919 Browning). He fought on Bataan Peninsula against the invading Japanese forces and was surrendered on April 9. Forced on the infamous 65-mile Bataan Death March, he was subjected to capricious cruelty and abuse, denied water, food, rest and protection from the sun. Nearly all on the March had surrendered sick and malnourished causing thousands to die before they reached their destination of Camp O'Donnell. Coon credits his survival to God, or as he said, "We ran out of food, ammunition and men, but we didn't run out of prayer." His first POW Camp was Camp O'Donnell where he worked burial detail. For the next two years, he was held at Cabanatuan, Camp Lipa-Batangas, Camp Murphy-Rizal, and Bilibid. On October 1, 1944, he was shipped via Hong Kong on the Hellship *Hokusen Maru* to Taiwan where he was held briefly at the Inrin Temporary POW Camp. From Taiwan he was sent to Moji, Japan, via the Hellship *Melbourne Maru* arriving January 23, 1945. He was then shipped north to Sendai and became a slave laborer mining cooper for Fujita Gumi Kosaka Kozan (today's Dowa Holdings Co. Ltd.) at the Sendai-#8B Kosaka POW Camp. After his liberation in September 1945, he returned to the U.S. and was discharged from service as a Corporal on June 24, 1946. He returned home to work as Union Painter doing