

District hugs the Lake Erie coastline from Cleveland to Toledo.

Congresswoman KAPTUR also is the first Democratic woman ever to serve on the powerful Defense Subcommittee.

There, she is a strong advocate for national security, energy independence and adequate support for the armed forces.

She is also a member of the Interior Subcommittee where she fights for clean water programs that protect our Great Lakes.

Earlier in her congressional career, she served on the Appropriations Financial Services Subcommittee as well as the Banking Committee.

She served on the Budget Committee as recently as the 112th Congress.

She has received the Prisoner of War "Barbed Wire" Award for her commitment to veterans' affairs.

She has secured funding for a path-breaking study into the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorders and other mental health issues among our armed forces.

And she helped lead a community effort to save the 180th Fighter Wing in Toledo when it was threatened by the base closure commission.

Congresswoman KAPTUR has always shown strong interest in America's standing in the world and its relations with other countries.

She currently serves on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and co-chairs the Congressional Hungarian Caucus and also the Ukraine Caucus.

A strong supporter of Middle East peace, she directed the first surplus farm commodities in 1999 to support the peace process in Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Congresswoman KAPTUR remains dedicated to the development of democratic institutions globally.

She has spearheaded private charitable efforts to alleviate suffering in nations such as Ukraine and Vietnam.

As leader on issues related to international trade and human and labor rights, MARCY KAPTUR has led the fight for fair trade laws, dating back to her opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement.

In 1993, Congresswoman KAPTUR was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University of Toledo in recognition of her "effective representation of the community."

St. Ursula Academy named MARCY KAPTUR Alumna of the Year in 1995.

She is recipient of the Taubman College Distinguished Alumna award from the University of Michigan, making her the first woman so recognized and the first graduate of the Urban and Regional Planning Program to be so honored.

MARCY KAPTUR recently received the Director's Award from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University for her commitment to increased understanding and appreciation of the peoples and cultures of Eurasia, Russia and East Europe.

MARCY KAPTUR was named the National Mental Health Association's "Legislator of the Year" for her championing mental health and received the 2002 Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

MARCY KAPTUR is also the author of a book, *Women in Congress: A Twentieth Century Odyssey* that was published by Congressional Quarterly in 1996.

Dedicated to the principle that fiscal responsibility begins in "one's own backyard," Con-

gresswoman KAPTUR has consistently returned money to the federal Treasury.

MARCY KAPTUR refuses to accept Congressional pay raises and donates them to offset the federal deficit and charitable causes in her home community.

MARCY KAPTUR leads the charge on urban agriculture in Congress, she introduced the Urban Agriculture Production Act of 2017, which will create help create jobs, healthier, local food options and opportunities for cities and towns to become part of the food production process.

With all of that said, Congresswoman KAPTUR's kindness, thoughtfulness, and generosity precede her.

When Hurricane Harvey hit the 18th District, she promptly sent my staff a box of doughnuts, knowing they would need that extra push to get through the busy hours ahead.

Congresswoman KAPTUR goes above and beyond her job description as Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies.

MARCY KAPTUR worked closely with me to pass several Jackson Lee amendments to Energy and Water Appropriations spending bills to provide funding for flood mitigation studies in Houston and Harris County and was crucial in securing House passage of the supplemental appropriations providing disaster recovery relief for hurricane Harvey victims.

So on behalf of the residents of the 18th District of Texas, I say thank you Congresswoman KAPTUR for being there and standing strong with us in our time of need.

Her compassion shows through random acts of kindness and thoughtfulness ranging from holding the door open for a young staffer to calling to check on the status of the 18th District as she is concerned about the human consequences of extreme flooding—I imagine her background in urban planning plays a role in her attentiveness.

As the Ranking Member for the subcommittee with Jurisdiction over the Army Corps of Engineer, Congresswoman KAPTUR helped in the effort to secure funding allocated to study floods—a crucial program for Hurricane Harvey recovery and future preparedness.

Thank you for your leadership, Congresswoman KAPTUR.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate my friend and colleague Representative MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio on becoming the longest-serving woman in the history of the House. On Sunday, March 18, she will surpass the late Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, who held the previous record of thirty-five years, two months, and fourteen days. But more than her longevity, Representative KAPTUR has brought to the House her tireless work ethic, her intellect, and her devotion to serving the people of lakeshore Ohio.

A Toledo native and the first in her family to attend college, Representative KAPTUR began her public service career as a member of the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commission and later as a domestic policy advisor to President Jimmy Carter. When she defeated an incumbent Representative in a stunning upset election in 1982, Representative KAPTUR came to Congress and hit the ground running. She has been a leader in the fight for higher wages, workers' rights, and ensuring access to affordable health care. It was Representative KAP-

TUR who first proposed the idea in Congress of creating a National World War II Memorial, and she wrote the legislation that eventually authorized its construction on the National Mall. As a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, Representative KAPTUR has been at the forefront of efforts to invest in both our national security and in domestic priorities that help working families access opportunities to achieve economic security and get ahead in Ohio and across America.

I have very great respect for Representative KAPTUR's intellect and her passion for working people and the pain she feels whenever they feel pain. No Member is more committed to drawing attention to and addressing the difficult challenges so many working people experience—not only in her native Ohio, but throughout the middle of our country.

I've been honored to serve alongside Representative KAPTUR, both on the Appropriations Committee and on the Floor of the House, for the past thirty-five years. I look forward to continue working closely with her as Democrats carry forward the fight for economic opportunity, equal justice, and stronger communities.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand today to congratulate my friend and colleague from the great State of Ohio, Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR who on March 18th will become the longest serving woman U.S. Representative in U.S. history.

MARCY, for 35 years, has served this nation and the people of Ohio with distinction.

It is my honor to serve with someone that never backs down from a fight and leads on all the things that are important to Ohio and all Americans.

I applaud her for her commitment and dedication to revitalizing our cities, ensuring fair trade deals and good jobs for American workers, increased funding for defense and energy security, and protecting the Great Lakes.

She has accomplished and contributed so much yet never forgot where she came from or the people that have helped her to become.

On behalf of the people of Ohio's 11th Congressional District, I thank her for her service and congratulations on this historic achievement.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is nice when we can talk across party lines about someone's excellent level of service. It has been an honor and privilege to serve with MARCY KAPTUR my 13 years here in Congress.

Unfortunately, I want to move from talking about someone with ethical, upright, and righteous scruples to talking about a former FBI Director.

□ 2015

I had concerns back when Robert Mueller was FBI Director. And some people have forgotten, but one of the things that he implemented as FBI Director that I have heard from FBI agents around the country caused a great deal of concern was what he

called a 5-year up-or-out policy, which, in essence—it is more complicated than this, but basically anyone who found themselves in a supervisory position within the FBI offices anywhere in the country, in the world, they were in a supervisory position for 5 years. At the end of that 5 years they had to either come to Washington and most likely ride a cubical, sit at a desk, or they could get out of the FBI.

Most of the honorable, wonderful agents we had in the FBI across the country that so many people here in Washington with the FBI like to point to—why? Because they can point around the country to upright, moral, ethical, honest FBI agents so that you don't look at the top of the FBI as it has been here. Since I have been here in Congress both under the Bush administration followed by the Obama administration, there have been problems at the top of the FBI.

The first time I had an opportunity to question Mr. Mueller, FBI Director Mueller, after getting to Congress in 2005, I was not aware of all of the problems that Director Mueller was creating within the FBI, and so I paid deference, in effect, to his service in the military, in Vietnam. I felt like he deserved that. But then, as I have said about other individuals, no matter how grueling someone's service may have been, Vietnam or elsewhere, it still doesn't give them a right to harm my country either through negligence or intentional misconduct.

This 5-year up-or-out policy—people didn't realize what I was understanding and realizing from around the country—was doing massive damage to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. And I kept wondering, "Why would he do this?"

Now, I understand here in Washington it wouldn't be a bad policy. If you are in a supervisory position for 5 years in Washington, maybe you ought to be bounced out into the real United States, outside this surreal District of Columbia for government service, the paradise for bureaucrats. That would have been a far better policy for the FBI, for probably any bureaucracy here.

For many of the departments and agencies in Washington, that wouldn't be a bad idea: Okay. If you are in a supervisory position in Washington, D.C., for 5 years, at the end of the 5 years you have to go out to the real world, go out to the United States itself, in one of the offices out there and deal with real people in real situations rather than this bubble in Washington, D.C., inside the beltway.

That might have been a good policy, but that is not the one that Robert Mueller utilized.

As I wrestled with that—why would someone implement a policy that forced some of the best people in law enforcement, happened to be in the FBI, in a supervisory position, force them out, why would an FBI Director do that?—it became clear. And I be-

lieve it was NPR that had an article, I believe it was, about this policy of Mueller's and how, I believe it was in part of 2007, Mueller's policy ran off around 140 or so supervisors in our FBI offices.

From the FBI agents I knew who were in supervisory positions around the country, some had 20, 25, 30 years of experience. So when one thinks about 140 FBI agents with absolutely priceless, invaluable experience in law enforcement around the country, and Mueller runs them off not because they are unethical—all the cases of which I am aware, they were very ethical. They were good law enforcement officers.

And for those who have been in law enforcement, whether Federal or State or local, I think most would agree with this comment that it takes probably 5 years before someone in law enforcement can gain the respect of other law enforcement officers, and especially if that officer, that agent is with the FBI; because there are too many local, State law enforcement who have dealt with FBI agents who came in, wanted to make a name for themselves, the local officers would do the research, they would do the real tough police work going out, knocking on doors, talking to witnesses, only to have their work, when they finally find the culprit, have, as I have heard local law enforcement talk about, the FBI swoop in, have a press conference, and take the credit for the local work.

So that is a reputation, fair or unfair, that local law enforcement often are thinking about when they see a new FBI agent come into town. They are watching to see: Is this person going to be a selfless team player, strictly in the pursuit of law and order and the rule of law, or are they going to come in and use my work to make a name for themselves?

Over 5 years or so, the FBI agents would gain respect. I have seen it, read about it, and I know that that has, too often, been the case. It takes a while to build that kind of respect among local law enforcement and also to build that kind of respect in the criminal community so that they know that is a non-nonsense person, that the FBI agent is not about ego; it is about following the law and making sure everybody else does.

Yet here Robert Mueller comes in as FBI Director, and he is putting in place a policy that is getting rid of the best of the best that we have in the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

And some say, well, you may not realize, but he was a Bush appointee. I know he was. And he took office as Director of the FBI shortly before 9/11, so it would be a bit unfair to blame Robert Mueller for failing to see what was coming on 9/11 because he had just simply not been in office that long.

But Director Mueller implemented this policy. And as I struggled with why he would do this—he is running off thousands of years of experience. I mean, just in that, about, three-fourths

of 1 year, 2007, where it was maybe, I believe, about 140 supervisory agents who Mueller ran off—not for unethical conduct, not for inefficiency or inability to be a good law enforcement officer, no. He ran them off because they, perhaps, had too much experience.

Anybody who has concern about their own self-image and perhaps—I mean, I was wrestling with why somebody would run off thousands of years of experience within the FBI, and what I kept coming back to is perhaps there is some kind of insecurity that would cause a Director to be concerned that there would be people within the FBI that might not be complete yes-men, who might have more experience and, because they have been there 20, 30 years, be able to say: Director Mueller, I know this appears to be a good idea. That is what we thought 20 years ago or 15 years ago. We tried that, and it failed. And let me explain to you why, and perhaps I can help suggest a better policy or a better approach to this criminal case or this type of case.

When you start running off thousands of years of experience within the FBI, you are creating a great vacuum for experience within the FBI. So that could create situations, and did, where you could have people who were the special agent in charge in the supervisory position for 5 years, and then, because of Mueller's policy and them not wanting to take their family to Washington, D.C., and sit in some cubical or sit at some desk, be a yes-man—they wanted to be law officers.

And so, in many cases of which I had heard, FBI agents said: I am not going to sit in a cubical for Mueller. I am a law officer. I am about investigating and enforcing the law. So I am getting out. I am going to make more money where I am going. I would rather have stayed in the FBI. That is where my heart is. That is where I wanted to be. But Mueller is forcing me out. Yeah, it will be better for my family. I will have better hours. I will make more money. But I am not going to Washington. I want to be here in real America making a difference here.

Those are the kind of people that Robert Mueller ran off. Maybe it was his insecurity. Maybe, some have said, it was a God complex. I don't know. But I know, in my heart, I believe Robert Mueller did more damage to the FBI than all of the FBI Directors put together since J. Edgar Hoover. And it is dangerous when one person runs off so many people.

So when we came to find out—and again, this was during the Bush administration, the second term. Alberto Gonzalez was the Attorney General. And we had been assured that this very dangerous—dangerous because it was so easily manipulated and abused, but it was called the National Security Letters, NSLs. They were like a subpoena, except without the formalities.

Under this law that created what are called the National Security Letters, someone in the Justice Department

could simply write a letter to an individual, to a company, to a bank, and say: I am writing this under Federal law regarding National Security Letters that allows me to just simply send a letter to you, sign the letter, and direct you to deliver to me all of the documents you have regarding this person or this company, whatever the case might be.

They would also put into the letter what the law said, that if the recipient of the letter leaks or tells anybody about that letter, then they have violated the criminal law of the United States and they can be put in prison for leaking, for saying that they had received a letter from the FBI or Justice Department asking for documents.

That is a powerful weapon for the U.S. Congress to hand over to the Justice Department, and especially if it is utilized by one lone FBI agent.

Well, we have been told in Judiciary Committee repeatedly by FBI Director—we have been told informally, talking about the NSLs, National Security Letters, no, there are no known abuses of the National Security Letters. And then there was an inspector general investigation just to see whether there had been any abuse of these National Security Letters.

The report came back from the inspector general that there were potentially thousands of abuses of the National Security Letters where an FBI agent just sent the letter and, under the Fourth Amendment under our Constitution, there was no probable cause that a crime was committed.

□ 2030

There was no evidence that this individual committed a crime. The FBI agent just wanted to find out more about this person; maybe do a fishing exercise to see if there might be something that the FBI agent might investigate.

Perhaps the FBI agent, maybe he didn't like somebody in the community, so he wanted to see if there was anything out there, maybe in his banking records, or in his dealings with other companies. So he sends a national security letter, says give me all the documents you have on this person.

In my mind, that is a violation of every American's constitutional rights. It was a gross deviation from propriety. It violated what FBI Director Mueller told us about how the NSLs were being used as an investigatory tool, and a lot of us got very upset. And I think, to a large degree, that is why the Attorney General ended up stepping down.

In retrospect, it really should have been Robert Mueller who stepped down. They were his FBI agents. He failed to control; he failed to provide proper supervision. And I can't help but think perhaps a contributing factor, maybe the contributing factor to all of the widespread abuses of this power that Congress gave the Justice Department could well have been, probably was be-

cause FBI Director Robert Mueller decided to get rid of thousands of years of experience.

These are the agents, the supervisors, the people with the most experience that could have told a younger, inexperienced FBI agent: You may be tempted to do this, but that would be an abuse. Don't even try it. Don't even go there.

But because Mueller had stripped the FBI of thousands of years of experience, there were not the "gray hairs" or the "no hairs" that were out there to mentor younger FBI agents. Sure, there were some around, but not like there would have been had there been such insecurity or whatever it was that caused FBI Director Robert Mueller to do such terrible damage to the ranks of the FBI.

This is a guy that we were told: He will be an absolutely perfect special counsel. Well, I knew as soon as I heard that he was being appointed that this was a mistake; that this is a guy that did such horrendous damage to the FBI's ranks, to their experience level.

In fact, as I mentioned to FBI Director Mueller on one of the occasions where I was given the chance to ask questions during our Judiciary Committee hearing, in essence, I said: Director, do you realize that if you really applied your 5-year up-or-out policy to everyone in the FBI in a supervisory position, since you think it is such a good idea, you, Director Mueller, would have had to have left before September of 2006?

But instead of being consistent in the way he treated himself as he treated such invaluable FBI agents when he ran them off for no reason other than possibly insecurity, not only did he serve 10 years as FBI Director, which was an insult to all of those he ran off after 5 years, but then President Obama said: Hey, I am going to extend you 2 years.

An ethical, fair man, I believe, would have said: I am sorry, President Obama, but I was so vicious in the way I implemented this 5-year up-or-out policy and ran so many good agents off, it would be inappropriate, not only for me to have served 10 years, but to add 2 years on top of that, 12 years. But Robert Mueller did not do that. He was not fair across the board. He was not consistent.

That brings me back to—here is a report, March 15 of 2012, by NPR, the headline is: "Report: Prosecutors Hid Evidence in Ted Stevens Case."

Now, Ted Stevens, as I recall, was the longest serving Republican in the Senate back in 2008. Senator Stevens was running for re-election, and he was considered by many to be one of the most ethical, upright Senators out of the 100 who were in the U.S. Senate. Yet Mueller's FBI decided, apparently, to take out this patriotic, honest, honorable U.S. Senator by what I consider to be abuse of the justice system.

This article from NPR says, it starts with this:

"A blistering report released Thursday found that the government team concealed documents that would have helped the late Stevens, a longtime Republican Senator from Alaska, defend himself against false-statements charges in 2008. Stevens lost his Senate seat as the scandal played out, and he died in a plane crash 2 years later.

"The 500-page report by investigator Henry F. Schuelke III shook the legal community, as law professors described it as a milestone in the history of prosecutorial misconduct.

"Investigators weren't talking Thursday. But Brendan Sullivan, who defended the Senator, had plenty to say. 'The extent of the corruption is shocking,' Sullivan says. 'It's the worst misconduct we've seen in a generation by prosecutors at the Department of Justice.'

But it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that this was an FBI case, and it is difficult to believe that the Director of the FBI would have not been personally monitoring, if not personally dictating instructions in such a politically sensitive case as a long-term, sitting U.S. Senator; that if you are going to use and manipulate the Department of Justice to take out a U.S. Senator, you should be extraordinarily sure that you have a legitimate case.

But I don't have the information that would indicate what briefings FBI Director Mueller had over the investigation, but I would humbly submit, Mr. Speaker, either Director Mueller got regular briefings on the investigation and development of the case against Senator Ted Stevens, or he was incompetent in not even bothering to keep abreast of developments in a case that would be so politically sensitive.

But this article says: "The report"—by the Inspector General—"is based on a review of 128,000 documents and interviews with prosecutors and FBI agents on the hot seat."

But sadly, the FBI, under Mueller, pushed this case, this investigation, to a head so that it was capable of being tried before the 2008 election in November and, in fact, Stevens was convicted just days before the election, and then I believe he only lost the race for Senate by a couple of thousand votes or so.

But the report says that prosecutors should have shared information that might have obliterated the witness' credibility against Stevens, and they had evidence that their key witness had told the same story 55 different times; but that the FBI got evidence that their key witness had had a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old girl and then asked the girl to lie about it under oath. And so it is easy to see how he would have been manipulated.

But after telling the story that would have acquitted Ted Stevens, as he should have been acquitted we now know from all the evidence, actually, they were able to push the witness into changing his story immediately before trial in order to testify against Stevens.

Like I said, we do not know exactly what Mueller knew, didn't know, but he surely had to know when the FBI agent who was assisting his supervisor in the case, when he did an affidavit, signed it under penalty of perjury, indicating the improprieties of the agent in charge of the case, which is named Kepner, Director Mueller had to have known that one of his agents said: I cannot live with this prosecutorial misconduct. This is figuratively what he said.

The agent in charge, the FBI agent in charge, hid evidence that would have proved what I believe, beyond a reasonable doubt, Ted Stevens was not guilty. Not just raised a reasonable doubt; would have proved he was not guilty.

As the Alaska Dispatch News asked in their headline from their article in September 2016—actually, June 6, 2012, then updated September 2016, their headline asked: “Why is lead FBI agent in botched Ted Stevens case still employed?”

So we do know, under Mueller's FBI, that he did such horrific damage, running off thousands of years of experience, years later, after one FBI agent had such pangs of conscience that an innocent man, Ted Stevens, was convicted when he was 100 percent not guilty, the agent that was the whistleblower had been run off from the FBI. That had to have been with Mueller's consent. He was removed from every criminal case, which means you need to get out because you are not going to have a job.

Yet the agent, Kepner, who was in charge of the investigation, manufactured evidence, hid evidence, according to these reports, and she was still working in the criminal division of the FBI.

So when anybody talks to me about how fair and ethical and upright Robert Mueller is, I don't buy it. I have seen the damage he did to the FBI. I have seen the damage he created by not allowing his FBI agents to be trained to recognize radical Islamists.

Sure, after the FBI got notice under Mueller that Tsarnaev, the Boston bomber, had been radicalized and he was a threat to lives and U.S. security, oh, yeah; they sent out an FBI agent to talk to him. And apparently he said: Oh, no, I am not a terrorist.

And then they went the extra step to talk to his mother who said: Oh, no, he is a good boy. He is not a terrorist.

But because of Robert Mueller placating the Council on American-Islamic Relations that was a named party co-conspirator supporting terrorism, he placated CAIR, and he had the training materials for our FBI agents purged so they didn't know what to look for. That is the reason the Boston bombers were on the loose. He needs to resign and go home.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2045

DANGERS OF BURN PITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the Helping Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act, H.R. 1279, and I will talk a minute about one of my own constituents, Brian, who is facing this very dangerous condition.

From the summer of 2004 through 2009, my constituent Brian was deployed a total of six times on combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as a United States Marine Corps helicopter mechanic.

As a junior marine, he would haul trash daily to the airbases' burn pits. He helped burn all the unit's trash and stood security watch on the burn pits, which are always located near work or housing areas in airbases.

During each deployment, Brian would smell the trash burning in the pits and was always in the path of the smoke. He would often wear rags across his mouth and nose to reduce the foul smell and filter the smoke from the air he was breathing.

After some time, Brian developed breathing troubles, and the base medical center provided inhalers that helped temporarily. When he was home in between the deployments, he had breathing treatments and was diagnosed with bronchitis on multiple occasions.

In 2013, Brian developed a serious case of pneumonia. An abscess had formed in the lower lobe of his left lung. It ruptured, filling the lobe with fluid. The doctors removed a portion of Brian's left lung to save his life. The surgery kept him alive but greatly reduced lung capacity and functionality.

In 2016, Brian was offered the option to retire early from the United States Marine Corps. The Veterans Administration reviewed his case and determined a 100 percent disability rating. He is currently going through more testing due to undiagnosed heart issues and elevated blood level count for his blood cells, and he is still being treated for lung problems.

To this day, Brian reports having rib cage pain and nerve damage from the lung surgery on a daily basis.

Brian is, unfortunately, not the only servicemember whose health is deteriorating due to exposure to harmful substances from burning of waste in military bases.

While we are glad to see action taken in the NDAA for fiscal year 2018, we need a more permanent solution. I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 1279, Helping Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act, that would create a center of excellence within the Department of Veterans Affairs to better understand the health effects and treatments associated with burn pits.

I also encourage our United States military to provide proper breathing

safety apparatuses and reconsider their current policy of having burn pits on or near our bases.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and these reforms because we all have an obligation to care for our veterans.

HONORING DR. CYNDIA MORALES MUNIZ DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Dr. Cyndia Morales Muniz.

Dr. Cyndia Morales Muniz serves as an assistant director at Hispanic Initiatives in the president's division at the University of Central Florida, affectionately known as UCF in central Florida. As chair of UCF's Hispanic Serving Institution, HSI, Task Force, she facilitates communication and collaboration within the university community to strengthen UCF's Hispanic-serving efforts.

As founding president of the Latino Faculty & Staff Association, LaFaSA, at UCF, Dr. Muniz has been the catalyst that has elevated Latino programming at UCF. With grant support from the Hispanic Federation, she established the CREAR Futuros Mentoring Program at UCF in 2016. The following year, she planned UCF's inaugural Latino graduation ceremony, Nuestra Graduacion.

In the local community, she supports the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando and the Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund of Metro Orlando.

Dr. Muniz is highly regarded in the central Florida community. She also advocates for Latino student success at the national level, helping lead two national projects in partnership with Excelencia in Education and serving as the UCF representative within the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. She also coleads the Puerto Rican Education Relief Team at UCF, helping support displaced students affected by Hurricane Maria in their transition to central Florida.

Having been a first-generation, low-income college student, she takes full advantage of opportunities to discuss and elevate best practices and policy implications for underrepresented communities.

Dr. Muniz earned a bachelor's degree in sociology at Binghamton University, a master's degree in sociology at St. John's University, and a doctoral degree in educational leadership at the University of Central Florida. Most recently, she was selected as a 2018 College Board Professional Fellow.

Dr. Muniz is a proud Puerto Rican and resides in Orlando with her loving husband, Antonio.

For that, Dr. Cyndia Morales Muniz, we honor you.

HONORING VETNAH “YEMEN” MONESSAR DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Vetnah “Yemen” Monessar.

Vetnah “Yemen” Monessar is a community organizer and political activist with over 13 years of experience in mobilizing and elevating the narrative of Muslim Americans in our community.