

Sponsored by the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), National Spina Bifida Awareness Month is a time to highlight the needs of the community and recognize the importance of the work done year-round to advance research, programs, and policies aimed at meeting those needs.

As co-chair of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus, I've had the honor to work alongside SBA to advance Spina Bifida awareness, research, and public health efforts in Congress. Founded in 1973, SBA is the Nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating for and assisting those living with and affected by this debilitating birth defect.

Through its nearly 60 chapters in more than 125 communities, the SBA brings expectant parents together with those who have a child with Spina Bifida. This interaction helps to answer questions and concerns, but most importantly it lends much needed support, solidarity, inspiration, and hope.

Madam Speaker, Spina Bifida is a birth defect that can happen to anyone. Every day, an average of eight babies are affected by Spina Bifida and approximately 3,000 pregnancies are affected by this birth defect each year.

We do not know the exact cause of this condition, but research has found that if a woman takes 400 mcg of folic acid every day before she becomes pregnant, she reduces her risk of having a baby with Spina Bifida or another neural tube defect by as much as 70 percent.

No two cases of Spina Bifida are ever the same and so this birth defect is commonly referred to as the "snowflake condition." Children born with Spina Bifida typically undergo dozens of surgeries before they reach the age of 18. And during their lifetime, someone with Spina Bifida will face at least \$1 million in medical expenses, including multiple surgeries, and most can expect to spend much of their lives in a wheelchair or walking with braces.

Despite these challenges—and thanks to advances in research and medicine, along with policies supportive of children with disabilities—nearly two-thirds of Americans currently living with Spina Bifida have made it to adulthood. And while these strides are certainly worth celebrating, people with Spina Bifida—particularly adults—continue to face a crisis of care that could be largely prevented with the right resources and policies.

There are number of concrete steps we could take that would make dramatic improvements in the ability of adults with Spina Bifida to access quality care. One is to increase funding of the CDC's National Spina Bifida Program—the sole federal program tasked with improving the care and outcomes for people with Spina Bifida.

In 2008, the Spina Bifida Program created a National Spina Bifida Patient Registry to collect the scientific data needed to evaluate existing medical services for Spina Bifida patients, and to provide clinicians, researchers, patients, and families a window into what care models are effective and what treatments are not making a measurable difference.

Building on this in 2014, the Spina Bifida Program funded the development of a Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network to identify and to disseminate best practices for the care of people with Spina Bifida at all ages. However, with only \$7.5 million in annual funding, there are only 11,000 patients in the national

registry, limiting the ability of medical professionals to glean knowledge that would advance research in areas critical to improving quality of life.

Even modest increases to this funding would make an enormous difference. Spina Bifida research needs dedicated funding to ensure a better future for Americans with Spina Bifida.

This past summer, Christopher Rosati—a young man living with Spina Bifida—worked as an intern in my Washington, D.C. office.

I originally met Chris during an advocacy day nearly 18 years ago when he was just 4 years old. After those early days, Chris and I met again when he worked as an intern in my NJ office. Based on his good works, we offered him an internship in my office on Capitol Hill. At each location, during each internship, Chris proved to be a smart, hardworking, reliable member of the team.

Undeterred by physical challenges inherent in a commute and in some workspaces, Chris has set his sights on public policy and making a difference. This fall he returned to school as a senior at The College of New Jersey. My entire staff and I have been truly inspired by Chris' determination, dedication, good nature, and success. I am grateful for his contributions in my office, and we all look forward with enthusiasm and anticipation to the positive impact he will bring and the advances he will help achieve—for himself and the populations he will act on behalf of—in any career he pursues.

Madam Speaker, with added federal support, more people living with Spina Bifida could receive assistance they need along their life's journey. I invite my colleagues to join me in this mission and join me in the Spina Bifida Caucus to broaden our efforts and advance the goal of a better future for people living with Spina Bifida.

HONORING AARON LINDSAY

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Aaron Lindsay, who served the people of Florida's 24th Congressional District. Aaron has proven to be an outstanding addition to my office and shows great passion for everything he does.

Aaron has assisted my office in communications, constituent and community engagement, and policy research. He has shown a great understanding of the legislative process, a passion for learning, and a willingness to go above and beyond on assignments.

The son of Jeanelle and Tyrone Lindsay, Aaron is a proud Bison enrolled in Howard University's School of Business as a Marketing major. During his time as a Howard University Bison, Aaron has served as a member with the American Marketing Association for the School of Business along with being a Fellow, Panelist Host, and Ambassador for the Warner Music Blavatnik Business Fellowship Program at Howard University.

Upon transitioning from his internship, Aaron will proceed to complete his fellowship program with the Warner Music Blavatnik Business Center while also continuing to intern

with his marketing background, leading to a Leadership Development role upon graduation.

On behalf of Florida's 24th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Aaron Lindsay for his present and future accomplishments.

HONORING THE 2022 TENNESSEE AVIATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE RICHARD A. BLEVINS

HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Northeast State Community College's Richard A. Blevins, Director of the Northeast State Community College Aviation Technology Program with 43 years of service in aviation, who will be inducted into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame.

Ret. USAF Chief Master Sergeant Richard A. Blevins, a native of Kingsport, entered the Air Force in March 1979 as a Systems Analyst on Nuclear Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Space Lift Launch Systems. Chief Blevins held numerous positions during his 27-plus-year career culminating as the 30th Launch Group Superintendent, Vandenberg AFB, CA. He led three diverse launch squadrons of 181 USAF and 121 contractor personnel there.

Richard provided oversight and mission assurance on Delta IV/Atlas V Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) programs, Titan IV/Delta II space launch systems, Ground-Based Mid-Course Defense (GMD) system build, integration, and deployment. He was responsible for implementing \$660 million test launches, \$65 million modernization, and \$2 billion space lift certification programs. In addition, he directed maintenance activities on five launch complexes and ten missile processing facilities valued at over \$500 million.

During his career, he was selected to attend the ICBM Technical Engineering School, one of the youngest ranking sergeants ever chosen for the position. His leadership was demonstrated when he was awarded as the top Strategic Air Command Non-Commissioned Officer Academy graduate. Upon retiring from the Air Force, Richard was hired as the Training Manager for Bell Helicopter. His responsibility encompasses the training and qualification of over 500 personnel to meet Federal Aviation Regulations and ISO AS9100 requirements.

Richard is a graduate of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and holds a Masters Degree in Aeronautics. Richard is also a certified FAA Private Pilot, FAA Part 107 Unmanned Aircraft Systems, and FAA Airframe Certified Mechanic.

Each day, Richard helps ensure Northeast State's students are trained at the highest levels of reliability for employment in the aviation maintenance industry. The success of this program will benefit our region for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Richard A. Blevins on his 43 years of service to the aviation industry and being inducted into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
WILLIE MIMS

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Willie Mims.

Throughout his life, Willie has shown his commitment to educating, serving, and empowering residents of East County. He was raised in what is now Bay Point, California and graduated from Pacifica High School in 1963. It was around this time that Willie began engaging in local politics, advocating for the Rumsford Fair Housing Act which aimed to combat racial discrimination in housing. Willie also worked as a stevedore at the Concord Naval Weapons Station from 1965 to 1970. He went on to obtain his Associate Arts Degree from Diablo Valley College and his Bachelor of Arts and M.A. in English & Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. Willie obtained his teaching credentials in 1978 and went on to have a long career in teaching with the Vallejo City Unified School District. Willie worked as a teacher at John Finney High School, formerly known as Peoples High School, for over 25 years. After retiring in 2009, Willie continued to advocate on behalf of Contra Costa students and families, still regularly attending school board meetings.

Willie has worked tirelessly to support families and promote equity within the East Bay. He is a former mentor of S.I.M.B.A. (Safe in My Brother's Arms), a youth program for boys 8 to 16, former board member of the East County Boy's and Girl's Club, and served as a volunteer historian for the Parents Connected Organization. Additionally, he is an original member of Pittsburg's Black Political Association and part of Executive Committee of the East County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was also instrumental in the creation of the Antioch School District's African American Male Initiative which sought to address racial disparities in education. Willie received the Dr. Martin Luther King Freedom Fighter Award in 2008 in recognition of his efforts to promote racial justice and equity. Willie's community and the greater Bay Area have significantly benefited thanks to Willie's dedication and hard work.

Willie is a true leader in our community and we are grateful for the positive impact that his work has had across the county. Please join me in recognizing Willie for his many years of devoted service.

HONORING MRS. GLORIA MORENO
OF CAMERON PARK, BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS

HON. MAYRA FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mrs. FLORES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Gloria Moreno of Cameron Park, Brownsville, Texas on her amazing work as the community leader of Cameron Park.

Mrs. Moreno currently serves as the community leader of Cameron Park, Brownsville.

For the past 45 years, Mrs. Moreno has served her *colonia* by lobbying her local and state officials for the needs of her community. Her work as a community leader has brought many needed utilities to her neighborhood such as the paving of the streets and the installment of running water and sewer lines. Mrs. Moreno is the prime example of a community leader who is focused on helping her community grow.

Mrs. Moreno has served Cameron Park faithfully by being a voice for her fellow residents and advocating for the needs of Cameron Park and beyond. Her commitment to her home and her community deserves honor, praise, and gratitude. It is only fitting that Mrs. Moreno celebrates amongst her friends and family as her impact will be felt by generations to come.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Mrs. Moreno for her accomplishments.

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF JOSEPH
McMAHON: MT. EPHRAIM TOWN
HALL HONOREE

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mr. NORCROSS. Madam Speaker, originally born in Pennsauken, New Jersey, Command Master Chief Joseph McMahon has been a resident of the Borough of Mt. Ephraim, New Jersey for thirty-one years. Deployed nine times in total, Joseph McMahon joined the United States Navy in 1976 where he served for twenty-one years before being honorably discharged in 1997.

During his twenty-one years of service, he was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina; San Diego, California; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He served on the USS *Ponce*, USS *Barney* DDG6, USS *Conolly* 979, USS *Beagle* Grove LSD 32, YTB 802 an ocean tugboat, *Conningham* and USS *Forrestal*. He was involved in two major military campaigns, the Persian Gulf War and the war in Bosnia.

Command Master Chief Joseph McMahon is the recipient of eighteen campaign medals and ribbons, many of which he received on more than one occasion. He has been honored with the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (3 times), Navy Achievement Award (5 times), Navy Expeditionary Services Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, NATO Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, as well as several others.

Following his retirement from the United States Navy, Joseph McMahon continued his dedication to public service, joining the Camden County Sheriff's Office as a police officer for fifteen years. In 2015, he returned to the Navy once more, working at the Foundry, an old navy shipyard.

Command Master Chief Joseph McMahon celebrated forty years of marriage with his wife Diane McMahon on October 16, 2022 and continues to serve his community as a member of the Knights of Columbus and as the Deputy Post Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 262.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in honoring and commending Command Master

Chief Joseph McMahon of Mt. Ephraim, New Jersey, a resident dedicated to his community, country, and those who have bravely served and defended the United States of America.

TRIBUTE TO THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

HON. JAY OBERNOLTE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100 year anniversary of Soroptimist International, a worldwide volunteer service organization for women who work to provide access to education and training to achieve economic empowerment. Soroptimist was formed in 1921 in Oakland, California, when women were not permitted to join service organizations. The name Soroptimist—loosely translated from Latin means best for women.

Today the organization has over 72,000 members and supporters in over 120 countries and territories across the world. The Golden West Region of Soroptimist International of the Americas provides administrative support to clubs in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, with multiple locations inside California's 8th Congressional District, including in Big Bear and Twentynine Palms. In total, the Golden West Region has 38 clubs and nearly 1,000 members, all working to improve the lives of women and girls.

Organizations like Soroptimist International provide vital services to our community and we owe them tremendous gratitude for the work they do to support women. Their fundraising efforts have allowed the various clubs across California to raise millions of dollars to improve the lives of Southern Californian locals through their various projects and programs. I congratulate this amazing organization on their 100 years of service to our communities and hope that they continue the great work they do for many years to come.

HONORING ISABELLA CASTRO

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the service of Isabella Castro, who dedicated her time to serve the people of Florida's 24th Congressional District. Isabella has proven to be a very capable young woman and shows great promise for her future endeavors.

Isabella has assisted my office in foreign policy research of the Western Hemisphere and constituent engagement. She primarily informed my office and constituents of ongoing events and issues happening in South America and the islands of the Caribbean. Isabella has demonstrated her ability to adapt and excel in her responsibilities.

The daughter of Carmen Silvia Briceño and Carlos Felix Castro, Isabella, a proud first generation Peruvian-American, was raised in Miami, Florida. A proud graduate of the Burnett Honors College at the University of Central Florida, she is a 2022 Charles B. Rangel