

When it came time for Mayra to attend college, her mother struggled to find the resources to help pay for her tuition.

But because of DACA, Mayra was able to attend and pay for college, and eventually graduated from California State University Dominguez Hills, with a degree in Business Administration.

With her degree in hand, Mayra was able to pursue her dream of working in content creation, while also having peace in knowing that DACA would protect her against deportation.

In 2017, Mayra unfortunately lost her father, who lived in Mexico.

After a 3 year-long battle, she obtained Advance Parole, and received a travel permit to visit Mexico, to finally visit her father's grave and mourn his passing in-person.

This was the first time in 20 years that Mayra was able to return to Mexico.

Mayra's talent continued to shine through, and her persistence and resilience paid off.

With the help of Advanced Parole, she was able to further her career as a content creator, by seeking life changing job opportunities.

She was able to travel and work in London and other places, where she did content creation for films that were eventually nominated for awards at film festivals.

Mayra now works for the Long Beach Immigration Rights Coalition.

Recently, while taking photos of graduates of the Coalition's Leadership Academy Program, she met and was moved by the story of another young DACA recipient.

Mayra understood their struggle, and realized that she shared a common bond.

Mayra's job has given her the opportunity to capture the stories of those who have struggled to be an immigrant in this country. It has allowed her to change the all-too-common narrative about immigrants, to one that depicts immigrants as resilient and capable of moving forward in difficult situations.

When Mayra returned to the U.S. from her visit to Mexico and Europe, she was met with two signs each time.

One said U.S. citizens to the right and the other, non-citizens to the left.

When Mayra encountered these signs, she said to herself:

I know I have a permit to re-enter the country, but my reentry is not guaranteed.

I begin to pray to God hoping I say the right things, and that I don't face an officer who isn't going to know what advance parole is.

It's a feeling that is difficult to explain, you know you haven't done anything, yet you have to convince someone to let you into the country that you call your home."

Mayra is just one of many DREAMERS who have made incredible contributions to our nation.

She hopes that one day, she will be able to step to the right.

The time is now for my Republican colleagues and the Senate to pass legislation that will provide permanent protections for DACA recipients and DREAMERS in this country.

We can't wait any longer.

Because your home is here (Porque su hogar esta aqui). Forever (Para siempre).

HONORING MAJOR DREW DELA CRUZ UPON RECEIVING THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Major Drew Dela Cruz of the 60th Air Mobility Wing upon receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service, dedication, and sacrifice during Operation Allies Refuge. He exemplifies the best of America, and his tireless efforts guarantee the safety of all those who call America home.

Last year, the servicemembers of the 60th Air Mobility Wing met a challenge of colossal scale when they played a pivotal role in completing the drawdown of forces from Afghanistan. This command was critical in the largest noncombatant evacuation operation in known history, Operation Allies Refuge, ultimately saving over 124,000 lives. The 60th Air Mobility Wing directly supported the evacuation of nearly 13,000 Afghans while simultaneously managing the security and operations at Hamid Karzai International Airport. I have listened to countless stories from this group of brave men and women that exemplify the character, leadership, and bravery that is cultivated at Travis Air Force Base.

Service records only scratch the surface of the courageous actions performed by the 60th Air Mobility Wing. They put their hearts and lives on the line to save so many. These valiant servicemembers like Major Drew Dela Cruz epitomize the values of courage and patriotism.

On behalf of a grateful country and all the constituents of California's Third Congressional District, I would like to congratulate Major Drew Dela Cruz of the 60th Air Mobility Wing for receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross and extend my sincere gratitude for his sacrifice and contributions to the defense of this great country.

HONORING U.S. NAVY AND MISSISSIPPI ARMY NATIONAL GUARD VETERAN JIMMY SPARKS

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of U.S. Navy and Mississippi Army National Guard Veteran Jimmy Sparks. Throughout his long and distinguished career in the military, Mr. Sparks devoted himself to serve our great Nation. Additionally, he is an outstanding volunteer driver for Lee County Veterans Services. He embodies all the characteristics that make us proud to be Americans.

On October 3, 1944, Mr. Sparks was born in Iuka. He was one of seven children who picked cotton to help support their family, who were sharecroppers. Eventually, the family moved to West Memphis, Arkansas, and Sallis, Mississippi.

In 1963, Mr. Sparks embarked on a new adventure by enlisting in the U.S. Navy. He was

assigned to the USS Midway (CVA-41), an aircraft carrier. The second aircraft carrier was the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43). Mr. Sparks was assigned to the fighter squadron on both aircraft carriers, serving as an aviation storekeeper. He said the first North Vietnamese MiG-17 to be shot down during the Vietnam War was by the Phantoms of Fighter Squadron 21 from the USS Midway carrier—on June 17, 1965.

In 1967, Mr. Sparks completed active duty and entered the U.S. Navy Reserve for one year. In 1974, Mr. Sparks joined the Mississippi Army National Guard, where he served with the 123rd Medivac. During his time with the Guard, his duties included maintaining armor and supply, driving a fuel truck, and motor maintenance. He retired as an E-7. Mr. Sparks served 31 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard. In later years, the 123rd Medivac changed to the 185th Aviation Battalion.

While serving in the Guard, Mr. Sparks worked for 21 years for Cooper Tire. In 2006, he retired. In 2007, Mr. Sparks learned there was a need for a driver to support services offered by the Lee County Veterans Services Officer. Soon thereafter, he became a volunteer driver. He was one of several volunteer drivers during that time who drove Veterans 1-3 times a week to the Memphis VA Medical Center.

Mr. Sparks has been recognized numerous times for his community service. In 2010, Mr. Sparks was recognized by the Lee County Board of Supervisors for his outstanding service for giving back to Veterans for what they have given to America. In 2015, Mr. Sparks received the "President's Lifetime Achievement Award" for his volunteer work. In 2020, Mr. Sparks was recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as the Memphis VA Medical Center Voluntary Services "2019-2020 Volunteer Driver of the Year".

To date, Mr. Sparks has devoted 7,500 hours to his fellow Veterans. He drives approximately 160 Veterans to and from Memphis over one year. Mr. Sparks has logged approximately 200,000 miles during his fifteen years of driving to the VA.

We are thankful for Mr. Sparks' service to America and for his steadfast devotion to the ensure Veterans have access to medical services. These men and women have earned and deserve the best available care. We wish the continued success of Mr. Sparks' volunteer work. Additionally, we want to recognize his wife, Nancy, and their children: Rusty Sparks (Beverly) and Jennifer (Terry) Merrell. Mr. and Mrs. Sparks have four grandchildren: Grace Sparks, Brenden Sparks, Kade (Cheyenne) Merrell, and Shelby (Marcus) Gray. The Lee County Sheriffs Department is commended for allowing the Lee County Veterans Services van to be safely parked and monitored at their Tupelo facility.

RECOGNIZING MRS. COLLEEN CURTIS

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Colleen Curtis on

her retirement as Chief Executive Officer of United Health Centers of San Joaquin Valley.

Founded in 1971, United Health Centers (UHC) has become one of the largest and most important healthcare providers in the Central Valley. Rural communities like many of those found in the Valley are often overlooked when it comes to accessing health services. UHC plays a critical role in ensuring those in rural and underserved communities receive the healthcare they deserve.

Mrs. Curtis has been with UHC for 20 years, beginning her career in 2002. In 2009, she became the organization's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and helped to expand UHC's presence in the Central Valley. Throughout her 14 years as CEO, the organization continued to grow, expanding the number of centers to 28 across the Valley. Today, UHC provides medical services for over 165,000 patients through its over 1,000 employees, and last year completed nearly 1,000,000 patient visits.

Mrs. Curtis has consistently demonstrated her professionalism, dedication, and competency as an executive throughout her time leading UHC. She has been a constant source of stability and leadership, helping to guide the organization through unstable economic times and a global pandemic—all while continuing to expand and improve services for Central Valley residents. Her colleagues have described Mrs. Curtis as a "powerhouse in the healthcare industry" and I could not agree more.

I ask all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Mrs. Colleen Curtis on her 20 years of success at United Health Centers and wishing her a happy and well-earned retirement.

HONORING SUPERVISOR DIANE
DILLON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Napa County Supervisor Diane Dillon in honor of her retirement and service to our community.

Ms. Dillon was born and grew up in Napa, California and graduated from Napa High School in 1970. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1975, a Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1977 and a law degree from the University of California, Davis in 1981.

From 1981 to 2002, Ms. Dillon practiced law in Napa County, working as a partner with Coombs & Dunlap, LLP for eighteen years and specializing in estate planning, probate and trust administration. During this time, she also served as Deputy City Attorney for the City of Calistoga. In 2002, Ms. Dillon was elected to the Napa County Board of Supervisors to represent the 3rd District. Four years later, she became the first female supervisor in the Board's history to be re-elected.

As a supervisor, Ms. Dillon has worked tirelessly to promote conservation, support Napa County's agricultural community and limit the impact of wildfires. She helped establish the

first countywide fire hazard abatement ordinance in California and increased interest in the Napa County Firewise Foundation. Ms. Dillon also successfully advocated for \$1 billion in funding for wildfire prevention and management from the state legislature. In 2018, Ms. Dillon helped form the "Joint Local Governments," a movement led by Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties as well as the City of Santa Rosa to provide formal legal representation at the California Public Utilities Commission in response to PG&E action. In the face of unprecedented challenges including the 2015 Napa Earthquake, 2017 Northern California wildfires, 2020 LNU Lightning Complex fires and COVID-19 Pandemic, Ms. Dillon remained resolute in her commitment to help Napa County rebuild and recover.

Ms. Dillon has served on numerous boards and committees including the Rural County Representatives of California, the Association of Bay Area Governments and the North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium. She is a member of the California Library Association, Rotary Club of St. Helena, Napa County Historical Society and a founder of California Women Lawyers, the largest association of women lawyers in the United States. Ms. Dillon is the proud wife of Bill Moseley and mother of Jake and Nick.

Madam Speaker, Supervisor Dillon is deeply appreciated for her decades of selfless service and commitment to the people of Napa County. Her efforts have made our county a safer and more enjoyable place to live. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

HONORING DR. KELLI WARD,
CHAIRWOMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF ARIZONA

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a fellow doctor and the great chairwoman of the Republican Party of Arizona, Dr. Kelli Ward.

Kelli and I share a similar story. We got into medicine in order to help others lead healthier lives. The last thing on our minds was serving in politics. Around the same time—after seeing the disastrous fall into socialism after President Obama's first election, we both felt the call to defend and serve the people of the greatest country on Earth.

After a successful stint in the Arizona Senate and a near historic upset of Senator John McCain in the 2016 Republican Senate primary, Kelli set her sights on the chairmanship of the Arizona Republican party, winning in 2019 and earning reelection in 2021.

Kelli's tenure as chairwoman has been nothing short of spectacular. She led the charge in defiance of unconstitutional and abusive COVID-19 lockdowns and vaccine mandates. She was also one of the few activists willing to highlight and condemn the many instances of clear and significant voter fraud perpetrated in the 2020 elections. She even wrote a bestselling book about it. She also played an instrumental role in ensuring a successful audit of Maricopa County's disastrous election management.

Kelli created enthusiasm with our grass roots. She was relentless in her efforts to grow the party and register voters. She kept her politics conservative, but she gave her time liberally. She attended meetings across the state and kept a schedule few could match. She was tireless in her focus and getting the job done. Without her, many elections would have been lost and through her efforts she was able to stem otherwise insurmountable odds against candidates. In short, against difficult circumstances, she never gave up and helped many successful candidates.

Her work was noticed from the local chapters up to the White House. President Trump has Kelli on speed dial and seeks her counsel regularly.

I consider Kelli, and her husband Mike, friends. I hired their daughter Katie to work in my office. Like her parents, she was a joy to have. Lake Havasu and Arizona are blessed to have the talent and dedication of Kelli and Mike.

Like so many Americans—whether they be Steve Bannon, Michael Flynn, Mike Lindell, Mark Meadows, peaceful pro-life and election protestors, parents disgusted by sexual indoctrination, or even the former President, Kelli is facing persecution for her political beliefs through a Soviet-style weaponization of the federal justice system. It is wrong. It must end. But it will not tarnish the stellar reputation and career of Kelli Ward. My message is one that is unnecessary for a warrior like Kelli but I will say it anyway. Keep fighting. Her country needs her.

And thank you for all your work and sacrifice.

HONORING SENIOR AIRMAN ALEXIS SANCHEZ UPON RECEIVING THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Senior Airman Alexis Sanchez of the 60th Air Mobility Wing upon receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross for her service, dedication, and sacrifice during Operation Allies Refuge. She exemplifies the best of America, and her tireless efforts guarantee the safety of all those who call America home.

Last year, the servicemembers of the 60th Air Mobility Wing met a challenge of colossal scale when they played a pivotal role in completing the drawdown of forces from Afghanistan. This command was critical in the largest noncombatant evacuation operation in known history, Operation Allies Refuge, ultimately saving over 124,000 lives. The 60th Air Mobility Wing directly supported the evacuation of nearly 13,000 Afghans while simultaneously managing the security and operations at Hamid Karzai International Airport. I have listened to countless stories from this group of brave men and women that exemplify the character, leadership, and bravery that is cultivated at Travis Air Force Base.

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