

within our cherished community. Their tireless efforts to address the diverse needs and pressing concerns of our constituents resonate deeply with the values we hold dear.

In the pursuit of serving the constituents of the 18th Congressional District of Texas, their contributions have been nothing short of remarkable.

That is why today I rise to pay tribute to fourteen extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents of the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are:

Panashé Siachitema, Texas Tech University  
Ramanpreet Kaur, Indiana University  
Amy Arceo, Texas A&M University  
Ainsley Gill, Vanderbilt University  
Joel Crawford, Harvard University  
Kevin Darmadi, George Washington University

Lindsey O'Neal, Payne International Development Fellowship

Niyonsaba Magnifique, Payne International Development Fellowship

Vanessa Rogers-Wright, Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program

Wilson Pemboh, Texas Tech University  
Alexandra Wilhelm, Pepperdine University  
Parker Milligan, Oglethorpe University  
J Hardy, Howard University

Carrington Blair, Jackson State University

Mr. Speaker, the energy, intelligence and idealism that these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interning in the offices of my colleagues help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of people like them the future of our country is bright, and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE  
CAREER OF ELIZABETH "BETTI"  
KUSZAJ

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of one of northeastern Connecticut's greatest community advocates, Elizabeth "Betti" Kuszaj of Brooklyn, Connecticut. Betti is retiring after over four decades of service as the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce's Executive Director. In this role, Betti has earned a reputation as an institution unto herself, working tirelessly during good economic times and bad to keep Connecticut's northeastern region growing, while at the same time maintaining its unique rural appeal as, "the Quiet Corner". Betty's business expertise, knowledge of the people in the region, and well-deserved reputation as an ethical, trustworthy person, will not soon be replaced.

Betti has tackled her professional and personal life with an unmatched vigor—even before her career at the Chamber. Prior to the start of her leadership through the Chamber in 1982, Betti served within the Brooklyn, Connecticut school system having graduated from the University of Connecticut with a degree in

speech pathology. In addition to her service to the students of Brooklyn, Betti worked part-time as a waitress, demonstrating an incredible work ethic that would be a hallmark of her time with the Chamber.

Betti's transition from advocating for the growth of students to the growth of her local business community would completely transform the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's founding roots originate with the once-Brooklyn-Killingly Chamber of Commerce, which then served 70 businesses. Today, it is a regional bulwark in business development. The towns incorporated within its mission have ballooned from two towns to twenty-three. It now supports a community of more than 530 member businesses. By 1991, less than 10 years into Betti's visionary leadership, the change was made official, and the Northeastern Chamber was formally organized out of its predecessor chambers.

After the reorganization, Betti settled very comfortably into the role that many business and government leaders have known and appreciated her for—a tenacious fighter and dependable resource. Cooperation and collaboration have been hallmarks of Betti's time, as she built partnerships across the state and region, always putting the needs of her clientele first. She has served on multiple boards and commissions across northeast Connecticut—from Day Kimball Hospital to Putnam's Rotary Club. There are few places in the Quiet Corner that do not bear the mark of Betti's influence and assistance.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, my interactions with Betti began shortly after my election in 2006 when she invited my office to a Chamber Breakfast in Danielson. From my perspective, it was in difficult times that Betti really distinguished herself as a calm, competent and consistent leader. For example, when the U.S. economy was shaken in the wake of the great financial collapse of 2009, or more recently during the shock of the global pandemic which disrupted every sector, private and public in the region. Under Betti's leadership, the Northeastern Chamber became a hub for businesses small and large who needed help obtaining PPE, SBA loans and or information on Employee Retention Tax Credits. There is no question in my mind that due to Betti's efforts, she saved many businesses and countless jobs. In some ways, the pandemic was Betti's "finest hour."

Mr. Speaker, the likes of Betti's long career of consummate service to Northeast Connecticut's business sector will not be witnessed again for a long time. She has passionately sacrificed her time and energy for the betterment of our community. I am deeply thankful for her efforts over these four decades. In her retirement, Betti will spend some much-deserved time with her family, specifically her granddaughter who Betti will be happily babysitting. Although the Quiet Corner is losing a titan through Betti's retirement, we can take solace in the knowledge that she has left the chamber in a position to further flourish under the leadership of her successors. I ask my colleagues to please join me in further etching Betti's legacy.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF T.R.  
MERICKEL

**HON. DAVID G. VALADAO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chief T.R. Merickel for his 26 years of dedicated service to the Kern County Probation Department and congratulate him on his well-earned retirement. Chief Merickel became a resident of the Central Valley as a young man when he began attending California State University, Bakersfield in 1992. Not only did he excel academically during his time in school, but he also was a renowned member of the Roadrunner Wrestling team—even being selected for a two time PAC-10 All-Academic team selection. In 1996, he graduated summa cum laude with degrees in history and religious studies. Following graduation, Chief Merickel began his career with the Kern County Probation Department, where he worked as a Group Counselor in Juvenile Hall. He was quickly promoted to Deputy Probation Officer and worked in Juvenile Supervision, Investigations, and Intake. In 2004, Chief Merickel became a Probation Supervisor and oversaw the Adult and Juvenile Divisions. During his time as Supervisor, he became an expert in sentencing and case law and was responsible for the implementation of the Static Risk and Needs Assessment (SRNA) tool for the Adult Division. Seven years later, Chief Merickel was promoted to Division Director of Adult Services. In this role, he was critical in the implementation of Assembly Bill 109, the Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011, in Kern County. As Director, Chief Merickel was a member of the Community Corrections Partnership and worked with local partners on the bill's implementation to focus on safety, alternative sanctions, and reducing recidivism in Kern County. In 2014, the Kern County Superior Court named Chief Merickel as Chief Probation Officer. Chief Merickel has been committed to the Kern County Probation Department's mission of public safety for decades. His dedication to his colleagues, his work, and his community is a true testament to Chief Merickel's character and leadership. I know that his service to the Department and his commitment to the safety of Kern County will have a lasting impact for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in thanking Chief Merickel for his decades of service to the Central Valley and wishing him a happy and well-deserved retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT  
FERNANDES PERRY

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Robert Perry, whose commitment to education has left an indelible mark in his community and the greater San Joaquin Valley.

Born on December 11, 1938, Robert inherited the Portuguese work ethic, ingenuity, and

family devotion from his Pereira lineage. These values aligned well with his American upbringing as Bob seized his opportunities and became the man, we all knew and loved, one who devoted his life to God, family and nature.

Just one year after wedding the love of his life, Shirley, Bob was called to service in the U.S. Army in 1959. Upon being Honorably Discharged as a Private 1st Class, Robert and Shirley decided to settle in Hanford, CA so Shirley's mother could help her take care of their two sons, Mark and Mike.

After working as a machinist, Bob eventually moved the family to a tight-knit community in Three Rivers where the landscape fed his passion for nature. His love for the outdoors was evident in his pursuits of hunting, fishing, and boating. He found solace in the beauty of the world around him, and his observations of life and human behavior enriched the lives of those who had the privilege of knowing him.

This environment also fostered Bob and Shirley's dream of starting their own business—a school that would teach Medical Assisting, drawing from Shirley's training and work experience. Seeing the opportunity in the growing city of Visalia, Bob and Shirley risked everything they had to launch San Joaquin Valley College in 1977. With the help of three Medical Assisting program students, Bob ran the business operations and Shirley handled the curriculum, instruction and stability of the MA program. Teenagers Mike and Mark started out as school janitors this family of four ignited an unimagined trajectory of success.

Soon enough, their high hopes became promising returns as SJVC expanded to three cities before Bob and Shirley passed the reins to Mark and Mike in 1995. Under their new leadership and Bob's diligence on the Board of Directors, SNC has since become a renown private university with 18 campuses across California. To this day, almost a quarter-million graduates have received medical, business and technical education from SJVC with another 12,000 students currently pursuing their own education goals thanks to Bob and Shirley's dream.

Bob's legacy is one shared with family, but his qualities as an individual were uniquely his own. Beyond his professional accomplishments, Bob possessed an artistic spirit and a keen eye for beauty. He was a master woodcrafter, turning raw materials into intricate works of functional art. His creations were a testament to his attention to detail and the love he poured into each piece. Bob's talent as a storyteller delighted those around him, as he shared his adventures in hunting, fishing, and exploring, leaving cherished memories for all who knew him.

In his community, Bob will be remembered not only as a successful entrepreneur and educator but also as a compassionate and caring individual. He touched the lives of many with his kindness, warmth, and willingness to lend a helping hand.

Bob has finally reunited with he and Shirley's third-born son Timothy. Still, he is survived by his life's love, Shirley, their sons Mike and Mark, five grandchildren: Joshua, Kristopher, Stephanie, Alyssa and Aaron, and four great grandchildren: Savvy, Noam, Eva and Clover and nephew, Steve Perry.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the lifelong contributions of Robert Fernandes Perry to his family, commu-

nity, and the field of education. May his story serve as an inspiration to us all.

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RECOGNIZING 1001 EAST DELAVAN  
AND VIRIDI

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to recognize 1001 East Delavan Avenue, which can now mark its 100th year of operation as a manufacturing plant in the city of Buffalo. For 100 years this site has been at the forefront of American manufacturing and a homebase to the hard-working people of Western New York. Viridi has remade this location to meet the needs of today and tomorrow, providing job opportunities that recruit from surrounding neighborhoods through its partnership with GreenForce, and positioning Buffalo to be a global leader in clean energy manufacturing.

The plant began operation on August 13, 1923, as General Motors utilized the factory to assemble Chevrolet vehicles. At the beginning of its existence, Buffalo was the 11th largest city in the United States with a population of over 500,000 residents. Of course, Buffalo's economic standing was due to its immense manufacturing prowess, to which 1001 East Delavan was a steady contributor.

In 1994, American Axel purchased the plant from GM and continued manufacturing auto parts until its abrupt closing in 2007. Today, the former General Motors plant is occupied by Ontario Specialty Contracting, Viridi, and several community organizations, which has injected new life into the 42-acre property. As 1001 East Delavan's newest tenant, they are the catalyst that is responsible for bringing life back into the Eastside property. Viridi focuses on designing and building battery systems that are meant to redefine energy storage and power the transition to renewable energy.

Viridi is not only committed to revitalizing the site, but also hiring people from the surrounding community. They have teamed up with GreenForce Training, which handles recruitment, training, support, and retention efforts for entry level jobs. Viridi currently possesses a workforce of over 150 employees and is projected to increase staff levels to approximately 500 employees. Seventy-eight percent of Viridi and sixty-six percent of GreenForce applicants for production positions are located within the 4 zip codes that surround the plant. Thus, not only has 1001 East Delavan been a successful operation, but they are also once again delivering quality jobs for our community. Today, I ask that you join me in celebrating the centennial anniversary of 1001 East Delavan Avenue and Viridi's continued commitment to the city of Buffalo. We look forward to seeing this be a place of growth and opportunity for generations to come.

CONGRATULATING UKRAINE ON  
THEIR INDEPENDENCE DAY

**HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Consulate General of Ukraine in Houston, and all the people of Ukraine, on their Independence Day. The spirit of Ukraine is an inspiration to all freedom loving peoples in the world. The rights that we so often take for granted are under constant threat from dictators like Vladimir Putin. There is no stronger example of what it takes to stand up for liberty in the world today than the struggle fought every day in Ukraine.

I take a special pride in offering this congratulations as Texans and Ukrainians are most assuredly kindred spirits. In a book he wrote after a 1946 trip to the Soviet Union, the late John Fischer concluded that Ukrainians are "Texans in Fur Hats." It's no surprise that a significant portion of the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants to the United States settled in Texas. Our histories are intertwined, as is our love of liberty. Glory to Ukraine (Slava Ukraini).

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 109; NAY on Roll Call No. 108; YEA on Roll Call No. 140; YEA on Roll Call No. 212; NAY on Roll Call No. 231; and NAY on Roll Call No. 234.

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RECOGNIZING PASTOR EDDIE  
WILLIAMS

**HON. RASHIDA TLAIB**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 11, 2023*

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pastor Eddie Williams for his 17 years of service to the congregation at Lakeridge Ministries Church of God in Christ.

Lakeridge Village Ministries was founded on the principle of uplifting people from all walks of life in spirituality and that the gift of spirituality is not limited to clergy. Pastor Williams has sought to lead his flock under that guidance, fostering a true sense of community and caring for the most vulnerable. In addition to his work in ministry, Pastor Williams has sought to expand resources and options for people suffering from the pain of addiction and mental illness. His work at Lakeridge Village has accomplished so much in fighting the stigma around mental health issues and connecting those struggling with substance abuse to the assistance they need. In short Pastor Williams has performed outstanding service to the community through his ministry and charitable work.