

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF  
THE YEAR: ROSE AKORO

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Rose Akoro as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Rose is a proud mother of 8 children, an active member of her church, and a dedicated caregiver who provides for the needs of elderly clients. She has been a caregiver with 24 Hour Home Care for many years where her experience and compassion help her provide care to individuals unable to perform the tasks of daily living without assistance.

Beyond her work, she is an active member of River Town Community Church in Antioch, where she has volunteered her time to provide groceries and school supplies to local children and families in need. She is passionate about educating and providing for the next generations, taking the time to counsel and advise the youth of her community. Rose is a hard-working and dedicated community servant who makes our district more compassionate and inclusive for the most vulnerable members of our society.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Rose Akoro for her positive contributions to our community.

IDEAL INSTITUTE GRADUATION

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I celebrate the achievements of the Ideal Institute of Technology Class of 2023. Through hard work and dedication, these graduates have achieved an incredible milestone, and they should be incredibly proud of their accomplishments. By choosing the Ideal Institute of Technology, these students allowed themselves to gain real-world experience through the hands-on approach that the Institute is known for. The Institute has ensured their graduates have every tool they need to be successful in this next phase of life. As they take the next step, I know without a doubt these graduates will continue to make our South Jersey community proud.

I extend my sincere congratulations to these graduates and wish them all the best in their future endeavors. God Bless the graduates of Ideal Institute of Technology, and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING SORAYA MÁRQUEZ FOR  
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Soraya Márquez has been the state director of Mi Familia Vota Florida since 2012 and has dedicated 18 years to the Central Florida community. Additionally, she has a bachelor's degree in international business and business administration.

Soraya has successfully assisted thousands of individuals navigating the citizenship process and has helped reach over 115,000 voters through registration efforts. She has also helped immigrant families without a defined status and hosted several immigration forums across public schools in several counties.

Through her work, she hopes to create a well-informed and integrated Latino community actively engaged in finding solutions to city, county, and school board issues. She also hopes to see massive participation of Latinos in every election to strengthen democracy and continue living in freedom.

Previously, Soraya was a member of the group of Founding Women and vice president and president of the Association of Professional and Businesswomen. She has also received the Ohtli Award from the Government of Mexico, recognitions from the educational systems of Orange County and Osceola County, as well as a "Hispanic Leader" recognition from Univision.

In her limited free time, Soraya dedicates herself 100 percent to her family, her most cherished treasure.

RECOGNIZING KESLEY WHITE

**HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Kesley White of Leadville, Colorado for receiving the United States Department of State Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. As part of this prestigious honor, Kesley traveled to Nepal to study abroad.

U.S. Study Abroad programs are an important component of the federal government's efforts to ensure Americans of all backgrounds have the opportunity to gain global experiences and work across our borders to help address our world's greatest challenges. The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship provides exceptional undergraduate students with the opportunity to expand their cultural proficiencies, study critical need languages, and conduct STEM research. The scholarship has empowered over 41,000 individuals with financial need to engage in people-to-people diplomacy

and prepare for distinguished careers in public service.

I commend Kesley for pursuing an exemplary international education and representing America abroad as a citizen ambassador. This scholarship rightly recognizes a commitment to academic excellence. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is a privilege to recognize Kesley's many accomplishments.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN  
HERO ARTHUR WATSON

**HON. BETH VAN DUYNE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Arthur Watson. Arthur never shied away from protecting his country and fellow man. Before joining the Merchant Marines in 1943, Arthur spent two years helping with reconstruction in Pearl Harbor where he built warehouses and storage facilities to support the Pacific War effort as a member of the Civilian Construction Corps.

As a Mariner during the height of WWII, he was stationed on the SS *Oklahoma* when his ship was torpedoed by a German Nazi sub. Despite the explosion throwing him to the ground, the heat blistering his face, and flames engulfing the ship, Arthur fought to make his way below deck. He rushed to his station to help an Officer crank the lifeboat out to the ocean where he and 21 others survived for 18 days at sea. After this harrowing experience, his work was not done. He would sail out again, bringing supplies to the forces across Europe before eventually leaving the Merchant Marines.

An honorable Veteran and hero to 21 shipmates, he passed away on Thursday, October 5 at the age 103 in Grapevine, TX. Through his courage and bravery, Arthur encapsulated what it means to have selfless service and patriotism.

I would like to thank Arthur for his irreplaceable sacrifices to protect our freedom, and I hope you'll join me in praying for his family and friends.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF  
THE YEAR: SYLVIA SERRANO

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Sylvia Serrano as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Sylvia is a dedicated and passionate leader who has touched the lives of countless members of her community. Sylvia proudly represents her home of Hercules as the President

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

of the Bay Front Chamber of Commerce where she works to help promote local small businesses. Since joining the Chamber of Commerce, Sylvia has demonstrated outstanding leadership and played an instrumental role in fostering economic growth and development in Hercules. She has demonstrated her commitment to growing the economy of Contra Costa County by helping local businesses navigate a way out of the COVID-19 pandemic. She also serves as Director of the Hercules Education Foundation where her work has helped enhance the educational opportunities for youth in Hercules.

She has helped raise contributions from individuals, organizations, businesses, and institutions to enhance the quality of the classroom experience in Hercules's public schools. Sylvia is known to go above and beyond to engage with her community and approach everyone with a warm and compassionate nature.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Sylvia Serrano for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING SAMUEL VILCHEZ  
SANTIAGO FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE  
MONTH

### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Samuel Vilchez Santiago, originally from Venezuela, came to the United States at an early age, escaping political persecution from Venezuela's authoritarian regime. He is a non-profit leader and advocate who has dedicated his professional career to fighting to protect the rights of Floridians.

Samuel has served as the Florida state director for the American Business Immigration Coalition, the human and civil rights non-profit manager at ActBlue, and the Florida campaign manager at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, among others. He is also a board member at Alianza Center, the HOPE Community Center, and the Venezuelan American Caucus. He also served as a member of the Orange County Charter Review Commission in 2020, becoming the youngest member of a county board in Orange County history. Through these roles, Samuel has helped to effectively design and implement policies that have improved the quality of life of those around him, including protecting in-state tuition access for Dreamers in Florida, the designation and re-designation of TPS for 800,000 Venezuelans, the creation of the humanitarian parole program, and the critical environmental protections to clean water and the Split Oak forest.

Samuel has also worked to advance Democratic values and candidates at the local, state, and federal levels. He currently serves as the chair of the Orange County Democratic Executive Committee and is a member of the Democratic National Committee, making him the first Gen-Z person to hold both of these leadership roles. In 2018, he led a successful youth-run campaign to elect Johanna López to the Orange County School Board, making her the first Latina member of the Board.

Samuel graduated as valedictorian from Colonial High School in 2015 and obtained a

bachelor's degree from Princeton University and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Oxford. He is a recipient of former President Barack Obama's Volunteer Service Award, the Congressional Youth Award, and the Eisenhower Fellowship.

GINO MARTIGNETTI

### HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, this June, I had the honor of celebrating Gino Martignetti's achievement of the rank of Eagle Scout. Gino joined the Scouts at the age of eleven, beginning as a Tiger Cub Scout and quickly rising through the ranks. After transitioning to the Boy Scouts, Gino continued to thrive with the Scouts, and he has now achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. He is an involved member of the Scouting community having held several leadership positions over the years, including Chaplin's Aide, Den Chief, Assistant Patrol Leader, and Quartermaster. For his Eagle Scout Service Project, Gino generously donated his time and his efforts to build a gaga ball pit for Guardian Angels Regional School in Gibbstown, South Jersey. Gino will be continuing his education at Rowan College of Gloucester County starting this fall where he will be participating in their Physical Therapy Assistant Program.

It is my privilege to recognize his achievements and I wish him the best in all his future endeavors. God Bless Gino Manignetti and God Bless the United States of America.

HONORING REVEREND MARVIN  
CHANDLER: PASTOR, PEACE-  
MAKER, AND MUSICIAN

### HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I rise to honor Reverend Marvin Chandler, my constituent, and a renowned Hoosier who made profound accomplishments in the Civil Rights Movement, as a jazz musician, and through his work as a pastor promoting peace. Rev. Chandler was born in Bloomington, Indiana on October 3, 1929, and he was 93 years old when he died at his home in Indianapolis on September 23, 2023.

After graduating from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1963, Rev. Chandler was appointed as Associate Executive Director of the Rochester Area Council of Churches—as the Council's Christian Education Director. The following year, during the tragic Rochester Race Riots, Reverend Chandler served as a liaison between the Black community of Rochester and the Council of Churches. Working with a small group of community and church leaders he helped to facilitate recovery efforts from the 1964 riots.

Rev. Chandler helped establish the Rochester Area Ministers Conference and was integral in the launch of the Freedom, Independence, God, Honor, Today (FIGHT) organization, a community organization formed in the

aftermath of Rochester's 1964 riots. FIGHT advocated for change, taking on issues such as hiring practices, living conditions, and other critical areas. FIGHT leaders were also credited with stopping additional civil unrest when rioting hit other northern cities in the mid-1960s.

As a part of FIGHT, Chandler not only served on the steering committee, but also played a key role in FIGHT's negotiations with Kodak. He worked with Kodak representatives to develop a job training program for the large number of unemployed black Rochesterians. Similarly, in 1971 Chandler put his peace-making abilities toward efforts to resolve the prison riot in Attica County.

After leaving Rochester, the Reverend Chandler served as an executive with the San Francisco Council of Churches. He was a leading expert on the life of Howard Thurman, the noted theologian, philosopher, and civil rights leader. Later, Rev. Chandler was a visiting professor at Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, and he served as a visitor for a semester at Oxford University, England.

Rev. Chandler received numerous awards over his lifetime, including an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana, and the Luke Mowbray Award for ecumenical work from the American Baptist Churches/USA in 2008.

The Reverend was also an accomplished jazz pianist, inducted into the Indianapolis Jazz Foundation Hall of Fame in 2003, and a recipient of the Ralph Adams Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life of a generous and inspiring leader, Rev. Marvin Chandler.

RECOGNIZING MR. MICHAEL  
BOWERS

### HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Mr. Michael Bowers as he is awarded the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award from the African American Network of Kern County. Mr. Bowers is a Central Valley native, having spent the majority of his childhood and professional career in Bakersfield. He attended Texas Southern University and graduated with a degree in political science in 2005. After graduation, Mr. Bowers returned to Bakersfield where he began his career at Making a Difference, a local non-profit organization. Mr. Bowers joined my team when I was elected to the California State Assembly in 2010, first serving as Deputy Field Director and later as Community Liaison. When I was elected to Congress in 2012, Mr. Bowers joined my district office as a Senior Field Representative. His knowledge of the issues facing the Central Valley and strong relationships with members of the community were invaluable during my first term in Congress. After departing my team, Mr. Bowers became the Deputy District Director for State Senator Andy Vidak.

For over a decade, Mr. Bowers has partnered with local stakeholders on community engagement and economic development