

RECOGNIZING LUIS MOLINA-
BARRAZA

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 Luis Molina-Barraza of Westminster, Colorado for receiving the United States Department of State Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. As part of this prestigious honor, Luis traveled to Morocco 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 Luis 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 Luis' many accomplishments.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: TARA BEASLEY-
STANSBERRY

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 Tara Beasley-Stansberry as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Tara is a dedicated public servant, community leader, and businesswoman who has touched the lives of countless members of her community. Tara holds leadership positions in a variety of local organizations including the City of Vallejo's Planning Commission, Housing First Solano, Black Women Organized for Political Action, the Veterans Resource Program, the Vallejo Police Department's Chief Advisory Board, and the Vallejo Center for the Arts. She is also the co-founder and CEO of the local restaurant, Noonie's Place, that partnered with the Small Business Development Center to feed hundreds of essential workers, first responders, and unhoused individuals. She also worked with the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund to develop a revolving loan fund program to benefit small businesses in Vallejo. Tara is known to be a fierce advocate for underserved communities and has continuously demonstrated her dedication to uplifting people throughout Solano County.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to

honor and recognize Tara Beasley-Stansberry for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING CAROLINA WASSMER
FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Carolina Wassmer is a civic engagement specialist with over a decade of experience. Born and raised in Orlando, Carolina is the daughter of two immigrants who taught her the importance of education and hard work. Carolina received her master's degree in business administration from Herzing University and her bachelor's degree in political science with a focus on international relations from the University of Central Florida. She also has an associate degree from Valencia College. She has dedicated her career to serving Central Florida.

Carolina currently serves as the Florida state program director for Poder Latinx. Her diligent work is seen across Florida's Ninth Congressional District as well as throughout the state of Florida through her leadership on civic engagement and advocacy efforts around economic, environmental, and immigrant justice in the Latinx community. She previously served as a civic engagement specialist at UnidosUS, running Florida's largest Hispanic voter registration program in 2020. In 2018, she organized political efforts in Florida's Seventh Congressional District. In 2016, Carolina worked as a civic engagement coordinator with the Hispanic Federation, where she developed and implemented their first Central Florida-based voter registration program.

Carolina has dedicated her career to increasing Latinx participation in the American political process by expanding the electorate and empowering Latinos. Her passion is focused on developing and maintaining strong relationships with allies, stakeholders, and policymakers at both grassroots and grassstops levels. Carolina sees herself building the next generation of Latinx leaders to continue spreading the message of the importance of turning out on Election Day and showing up for the community every day.

DINO-BOTS

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I want to honor the achievements of the Dino-bots, a robotics team who developed a system nicknamed "The Coolinator". The Dino-bots recognized that thermo-electric plants require cooling to operate safely and efficiently, but the water used for cooling is returned to its source fifteen degrees warmer than before. They proposed an idea that nuclear power plants using a once-through cooling system build a pipe system that allows the water to journey twenty feet underground where a heat transfer will take place, resulting in a 7.5 de-

gree Fahrenheit cooling on the water exiting the thermo-electric plants back to its source. After consulting with a scientist from NOAA, it was concluded that this proposal would improve biodiversity and result in a major positive impact. The Dino-bots developed this idea while participating in the annual robotics competition hosted by First Lego League and were selected to move on to the Mid Atlantic Innovation Project Competition. The Dino-bots are actively searching for energy solutions for our Nation, and I am very proud of them for all their accomplishments. God Bless the Dino-bots, and God Bless our United States of America.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: SENATOR NANCY
SKINNER

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 Senator Nancy Skinner as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Nancy's public service began as a student when she was elected to the Berkeley City Council. She was a co-founder of the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives—Local Governments for Sustainability and remains a clean energy and climate change trailblazer. She was the U.S. director of The Climate Group, an international nonprofit organization that works with both private and public sector leaders to address climate change. She also served on the board for the East Bay Regional Park District and was involved with the East Bay Women's Political Caucus supporting women running for elected office. In 2008, Nancy was elected to the California State Assembly where she represented the 15th Assembly District for three terms. Elected in 2016, Nancy now represents the people of California's 9th State Senatorial District. She is chair of the Senate's Budget and Fiscal Review Committee and the California Legislative Women's Caucus. Throughout her years in public office, Nancy has authored and supported bills addressing social justice, climate change, education, gun violence, and countless other critical issues.

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

HONORING CARLOS ACUÑA FOR
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Carlos Acuña, a Colombian by birth, is a seasoned attorney with 15 years of legal experience who has made a significant impact on the Hispanic community in Orlando, Florida. As the founder and director of Acuña-Araujo

Law, he has been an unwavering source of support for his community.

A decade ago, Carlos chose Orlando as his home and established Acuña-Araujo Law, with a clear mission: to assist the Colombian and Hispanic communities. His firm has become a beacon of hope, enabling community members to address legal matters in Colombia without the need for travel. His passionate commitment to defending the rights and well-being of his clients has earned him their trust.

Carlos Acuña also serves as the president of the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce in Orlando. Under his leadership, the organization has worked tirelessly to strengthen trade and cultural ties between Colombia and the United States in the region. He has promoted business collaboration and economic growth, benefiting Colombian and American entrepreneurs alike.

In addition to his achievements in the legal and business fields, Carlos has dedicated himself to serving the Hispanic community in Orlando during his 10-year tenure in the city. He has offered free legal advice to those facing challenges, demonstrating his commitment to social justice and support for those in need.

His passion for the community and dedication to justice have made him an exemplary community leader. Carlos not only works within the Chamber of Commerce but also actively engages in activities that promote Colombian and Hispanic culture in Orlando, proudly sharing the richness of his heritage.

In summary, Carlos Acuña is a Colombian attorney with an outstanding legal career and a deep commitment to the Hispanic community in Orlando, Florida. His leadership in the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce, his passion for justice, and his solidarity with the community make him a role model and tireless advocate for the rights and well-being of those around him. His legacy will endure as a beacon of hope and support in Central Florida.

DIANNE GOVE

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is my pleasure to recognize and honor the illustrious career of Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove who has dedicated her life to serving our South Jersey community. DiAnne's journey began with a strong educational foundation. After graduating from Southern Regional High School, she pursued her passion for teaching, earning degrees in Social Science from Cabrini University and Monmouth University. For an impressive 32 years, she dedicated herself to educating and inspiring students, and her exceptional commitment earned her the well-deserved distinction of High School Teacher of the Year in 1992.

In 1984, DiAnne was appointed to complete the term of a former Commissioner in Long Beach Township. Her dedication and leadership were evident, as she was elected to a full term the following year. DiAnne has also served in various community roles, including

as an Eucharistic Minister and Lector at St. Francis parish and as a board member of the Southern Ocean County Hospital and the Ocean County Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. In 2003, DiAnne was called upon once again to serve her community, filling a vacancy as Mayor and Commissioner. She was subsequently elected to a fall term and served as President of the Ocean County Mayor's Association. In 2009, DiAnne's commitment to public service led her to the General Assembly, where she was selected to fill a vacant seat, and was reelected many times since. She is a champion of veteran's issues and she authored the "Veterans' Business Assistance Act," a bill that supports veteran-owned businesses that was signed into law in 2011. Because of her dedication, she has been recognized with awards such as the Southern Ocean County Women of Achievement award and the VFW Legislator of the Year.

I thank her for her lifelong commitment and service to her community and to the people of South Jersey. God Bless Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove, and God Bless our United States of America.

CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAMPA DIVISION OF VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to congratulate the nationally renowned Tampa division of Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) and the Veteran Mentor Program on their 10th anniversary. It is my honor to express my deep appreciation for this incredible milestone and for the impact that this team of mentors, judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys continues to have on helping veterans to recover from challenging times and the criminal justice system.

Started in 2013 by retired U.S. Army Colonel DJ Reyes, the Tampa VTC was formed to approach and mitigate the gap on many veteran requirements and needs often unavailable by the courts, local government or community services. Furthermore, the initiative seeks to build a platform to support, advocate and train veterans who find themselves in trouble with the law due to substance abuse disorders or conditions incurred during military service.

The Tampa VTC launched with six veterans and one mentor. Limited to about 25 veterans at any time and created with existing resources without additional funding from the county, state or federal government. The Tampa VTC soon overcame adversities, such as no additional funding or staff, to provide support to this vulnerable community. The initiative established strong roots and the trust of the community grew. It now operates with a consistent budget and small judiciary support staff. I am proud of the more than 900 veterans who graduated over the last 10 years and of Tampa VTC's graduation rate of 88 to 92 percent, making it one of the most suc-

cessful among the 623 divisions throughout the Nation. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic and other legal procedure issues, when numbers decreased, 50 mentors are actively serving and around 60 veteran defendants are on the docket. In addition, with the passage of the Veteran Treatment Court Coordination Act, the Tampa VTC was able to access grants and technical assistance from the Department of Justice.

I would also like to honor two Tampa Bay veteran leaders for their unwavering dedication to serving our community: Retired U.S. Army Colonel DJ Reyes and the Honorable Judge Michael J. Scionti. Colonel Reyes and his contributions, commitment and invaluable work with the Tampa VTC have shined light in the life of many of my neighbors. Judge Scionti, a highly decorated military officer and advocate for this vulnerable community, brings his own military experience to the bench to help address the unique challenges that our veteran community faces with a fair and impartial administration of justice. I am proud to have Colonel Reyes and Judge Scionti as allies in our commitment to improving the quality of life for those who sacrificed so much for our country. They exemplify the spirit of public service and represent the best of Florida.

Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to the service of the Tampa division of Veteran Treatment Court and its passionate leader, Colonel DJ Reyes, for their meaningful contributions to ensure no veteran is left behind. I want to congratulate this courageous organization on its 10th anniversary of public service and offer my sincerest wishes to their future.

COMMEMORATING TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE BELL ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF INTEX

HON. LANCE GOODEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 13, 2023

Mr. GOODEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise to commemorate the extraordinary service of Texas State Representative Gregory Keith Bell from Forney, Texas, and his company, Intex Electrical Contractors, founded in 1983 when Mr. Bell was the young age of twenty-one. Rep. Bell continues to serve as President and CEO of Intex, working with an outstanding leadership team.

Due to the extraordinary effort of Rep. Bell, Intex is celebrating its 40th anniversary serving the Metroplex. The company has received numerous awards for its excellent work and has been recognized as one of the top one hundred fastest-growing private companies in North Texas. The leadership team brings over two hundred years of industry experience. Intex is a Certified Minority Business Enterprise and was ranked Top Specialty Contractor in 2005. I am proud to represent Rep. Bell, his family, and the team at Intex in Washington, and I am proud he represents my family and me in Austin.