

has. On behalf of our entire community, I thank Joe for his lifetime of service.

RECOGNIZING POMONA DEPUTY
CHIEF OF POLICE CHRISTIAN HSU

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Christian Hsu and his 30 years of public service and dedication to the City of Pomona. The calling to be a police officer is an incredibly selfless and important vocation of public service. Those who risk their lives for the good of the community are worthy of the highest respect and appreciation.

Deputy Chief Hsu joined the Pomona Police Department in 1994 after graduating from the University of California, Irvine, where he worked several years at its campus police department. He also interned at the Laguna Beach Police Department. Throughout his distinguished career, Chief Hsu served as Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain. He was appointed as Deputy Chief in May of 2020. In that role, he assisted the Chief of Police in the day-to-day operation of the department.

Additionally, Chief Hsu holds Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory and Management POST certificates. He has also attended many distinguished trainings including the Sherman Block Supervisory Leadership Institute, LAPD Leadership Program, California Police Chiefs' Executive Leadership Institute, POST Command College, and POST Executive Development.

This November, Chief Hsu is officially retiring. I hope that he gets to rest and enjoy time with his family. We are grateful for his service to our community.

For his outstanding accomplishments, it is my honor to recognize Chief of Police Christian Hsu. His years of civic service and commitment to the city and the people of Pomona are worthy of the highest commendation.

HONORING THE CAREER OF KERRI
L. DONIS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Chief Kerri L. Donis for 27 years of her fearless leadership and courageous service to the Fresno Fire Department.

Born and raised in Moline, Illinois, Kerri First came to the Central Valley on a scholarship to play softball at Fresno State, where her leadership abilities were first realized. While pursuing her bachelor's degree in exercise science, Kerri also led the Bulldogs to three runner-up finishes in the Women's Softball College World Series from 1987 to 1990. For her efforts, Kerri was named a Top Dog Alumna by the Fresno State Alumni Association in 2008.

Following her collegiate success, Mrs. Donis became a fitness trainer where one of her clients happened to be the wife of the deputy

chief of the Fresno Fire Department at the time and first sparked the idea for her to become a firefighter, based on its similarities to sports. Not long after, Kerri answered the call to serve and was hired as a firefighter for the City of Fresno in 1996. She held this position for 4 years before swiftly being promoted up the ranks to Firefighter Specialist in 2000, Fire Captain in 2001, and Deputy Chief in 2004. Throughout these positions, Kerri served various divisions of the department, including Fire Prevention, Fire Investigations, and Operations.

It then wasn't until 2013 that the position of Interim Fire Chief presented itself to Mrs. Donis. Not long after, in January 2014, she accepted the permanent position of Fire Chief, making herself the first woman to hold the position in the department's 145-year history. Unprecedented, Kerri proved to be a leader of men and an inspiration to women in a profession where women make up only 4 percent of the nationwide force.

As acting Chief of the Fresno Fire Department, Kerri L. Donis proudly served the greater Fresno community and continues to support diversity and equal opportunity throughout the City of Fresno Fire Department. In effort to do so, she created the Girls Empowerment Camp (GEC), which introduces fire service careers to young women and provides them with hands-on training from local, active-duty firefighters. Additionally, Chief Donis has also worked tirelessly to fundraise for other Fresno Fire Chief Foundation programs that provide support for burn victims, promote safety for children, and provide education and resources for firefighters.

Throughout her career, Chief Donis has earned numerous distinctions such as holding a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and becoming a credentialed California State Fire Marshal Chief Officer, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), and Executive Fire Officer (EFO). Under her leadership, the Department has grown to 327 sworn firefighting personnel, 26 sworn nonsafety personnel, and 49 civilian positions for a total of 402 FFD members today. However, Chief Donis will be remembered most for her selfless acts and consistently putting the safety of her firefighters and community above all else.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Chief Kerri Donis for her retirement. May we continue to be inspired by her service.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN
HERO: HEERA KALIDINDI

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize Heera Kalidindi, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their un-

wavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Heera has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

A rising leader, Heera has devoted her time and talents to numerous initiatives, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to service and excellence. From serving as a leader for Youth 4 Unity to her service as a member of Girl Scout Troop 21638, President of the UNICEF Club, and Lead Volunteer for Central Bucks Cares Volunteer Teens, Heera's leadership shines across various platforms. While interning in my office, Heera immersed herself in the Service Academy Nominations process, which sparked her passion and led to my great honor of nominating her to both the United States Naval Academy and the United States Military Academy at West Point. This fall, she officially began her service as a Cadet at West Point, embarking on a journey to serve our Nation with distinction. Most recently, Heera premiered her powerful short documentary, "Veterans Voices: Female-Veterans Through History," a poignant tribute to the courageous women who have worn our Nation's uniform. Heera's journey is just beginning, and her impact already reverberates throughout our community. She is an inspiring example of leadership, dedication, and the power of service—setting a high standard for all who aspire to make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the work of people like Heera Kalidindi that our communities thrive, and our Nation grows stronger. Her actions remind us that progress is not forged in grand gestures, but in the cumulative power of selfless acts. She embodies the timeless American values of resilience, generosity, and compassion, showing us that the future is built by those who care deeply, act decisively, and give without hesitation.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to Heera for her extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional individual, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May her example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

HONORING FRED WALSH

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the life of Fred Walsh. Born on February 4, 1949, to parents Helen and John Walsh, Fred was raised in Arlington, Massachusetts, alongside his sisters, Susan and Judith, and his twin brother, John. After graduating from Arlington High School in 1967, Fred went on to receive his bachelor's degree in history from the University of New Hampshire and his master's degree in school counseling from Suffolk University. Following in his father's footsteps, Fred taught and coached

football at a local high for several years, before joining a midsized construction company.

Unfortunately, Fred's health forced him to leave construction after he and his twin were diagnosed with Alpha-1 in 1989. Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency is a genetic condition that increases a person's risk of developing lung and liver disease. Although there is currently no cure for Alpha-1, Fred always remained a vocal advocate for advancing research on the condition and supporting those also impacted by Alpha-1.

Over the years, Fred was deeply involved in both the Alpha-1 Foundation and AlphaNet, sister organizations co-founded in 1995 by Fred's twin, John. AlphaNet provides educational resources and health management services to members of the Alpha-1 community by connecting them with trained AlphaNet coordinators who also have Alpha-1. The Alpha-1 Foundation is a nonprofit focused on advocacy and advancing research on the condition. For many years, Fred served on the Executive Board of the Alpha-1 Foundation, including in the role of Vice Chair, and worked as an AlphaNet coordinator for nearly three decades.

After John passed in 2017, Fred worked to have legislation introduced in his brother's honor. The John W. Walsh Alpha-1 Home Infusion Act would allow for Medicare coverage of at-home augmentation therapy for Alpha-1 patients. For over three decades, Fred was a tireless champion of the Alpha-1 community, helping recently diagnosed members navigate the condition and continuously fighting to find a cure and improve treatment options.

Sadly, we lost Fred too soon on September 29, 2024, at the age of 75. Above all, Fred was a devoted husband to his wife, Pamela, and father to their daughters, Chase and Kailey. Fred's commitment to helping the Alpha-1 community throughout his time with the Alpha-1 Foundation and AlphaNet serves as an example to all, and his legacy will carry on through all those who had the great fortune of knowing and working alongside him.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Fred Walsh, and I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing his lifetime of advocacy and dedication to supporting others with Alpha-1.

HONORING A CENTURY OF SERVICE AND SACRIFICE BY THE PARISH AT THE BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH IN THE EAST END

HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a century of service and sacrifice by the parish at the Blessed Sacrament Church in the East End, as they celebrate 100 years of the building's dedication this month. The church's origins are rooted in humble beginnings. In 1904 and 1905, families gathered under tents in the hot Houston summers, holding services with little more than their faith and determination. They lacked a building or enough people to appear on a Catholic census. Yet, their vision was clear—to create a lasting spiritual home for the community. By the end of the decade, they would establish a

modest building as the burgeoning young pastor, Father J. Schnetzer, sought to assemble a parish worthy of significance. By 1923, the parish had grown beyond its original space, and a new church was needed to meet the demands of the growing community. As the new church was erected, words from the Apostle Peter were carved into its cornerstone: "As you come to him, the living Stone . . . you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house." Bishop Byrne dedicated the new church on October 12, 1924. This cornerstone of faith did more than hold up walls—it upheld a community. After the Second Vatican Council, the introduction of Spanish services opened the doors wider, ensuring that the Blessed Sacrament Church could truly reflect the needs of the Latino families who had come to call the East End home. As it had a half-century earlier, the church grew inside those brick walls as the faith grew.

Mr. Speaker, for 100 years, this church has been a place of worship, solace, and support, serving as a beacon of faith for families in Houston's East End. It has always stood for people over politics, placing the community's needs first and foremost. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this important milestone and the generations of parishioners who have made the Blessed Sacrament Church into the spiritual house that Peter envisioned.

HONORING WASHINGTON COUNTY ON ITS 175TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 175th anniversary of Washington County, Minnesota. On Tuesday, October 29th, the county board will hold a special meeting, open to the public, at the Washington County Historic Courthouse in Stillwater, the county seat and the birthplace of Minnesota. The recently restored Historic Courthouse was built in 1870 and served as the administrative and judicial center of the county for more than 100 years.

The first of Minnesota's counties, Washington County was established on October 27, 1849 through an act of the Minnesota Territorial Legislature which divided the Minnesota Territory into nine counties: Washington, Ramsey, Benton, Itasca, Wabasha, Dakota, Wadena, Mahkato, and Pembina. The county was named in honor of George Washington.

Among the smallest Minnesota's counties by area, it is the fifth largest county by population at 267,568 people according to the 2020 census. The easternmost county of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area, its southwestern border is defined by the Mississippi River and the St. Croix River which forms the county's eastern border with Wisconsin. At its southernmost point is the confluence of these two great rivers.

With diverse communities ranging from urban to rural, Washington County is home to a variety of thriving commercial, industrial, natural, and agricultural industries. Top among these industries is Health Care followed by Manufacturing, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, Finance & Insurance, and Retail Trade. Population growth and a vital econ-

omy have allowed Washington County to develop a prosperous and diverse local labor force.

Washington County also boasts plentiful natural beauty, including the St. Croix River Valley, which was among the first areas to be designated as a "National Wild and Scenic River" by the federal government in 1968. William O'Brien State Park and Afton State Park offer hiking, camping, swimming, skiing, fishing, biking, birdwatching, and other outdoor recreation just a short drive from Saint Paul and its east metro suburbs. The river towns of the St. Croix, including Scandia, Marine on St. Croix, Stillwater, and Afton offer historic charms to weekend tourists throughout the year.

Throughout 175 years, Washington County has played a special role in Minnesota as a place of historic significance and great natural beauty. Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating this anniversary of special significance to our east metro community, the Fourth Congressional District, and the entire state of Minnesota.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: JEFF BEKOS

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize Jeff Bekos, one of our district's distinguished hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Jeff has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

On July 5, 2013, the Bekos' lives changed forever when their vibrant 13-year-old daughter Hailey suddenly lost the ability to speak. Jeff and his wife, Liz, rushed her to the hospital, where she experienced the first of what would be thousands of seizures. In a matter of minutes, Hailey's life as a spirited cheerleader was upended, and she was diagnosed with Anti-NMDA Receptor Encephalitis—a rare disease that destroys brain cells, rendering patients unable to speak, walk, or control their movements. The weeks and months that followed were a tumultuous journey filled with countless challenges, seizures, and a four-month coma. Yet, through it all, the Bekos family found hope, faith, and strength through the community and support at the Ronald McDonald House, where they stayed for 254 days while Hailey fought for her life. This hope was instrumental in the fight for her life, and against all odds, Hailey emerged from her coma and is thriving today.