

oversaw clinical scheduling, managing resident education programs, and served as a liaison between the residents and the facility.

Before his term as President, Dr. Cronin served as a chair of the Academy's Advisory Board, as well as being a member of the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Dr. Cronin on a fantastic job as the American Academy of Dermatology President and wish him well as he continues his work with the Academy and his private practice in Melbourne, Florida.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE SHORT-TERM DIS- ABILITY INSURANCE ACT OF 2024

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Federal Employee Short-Term Disability Insurance Act of 2024, which would help provide financial relief for federal employees who have a short-term injury or disability, become pregnant or develop a pregnancy-related illness. This bill would offer federal employees short-term disability insurance at no cost to the federal government. Employees would be responsible for 100 percent of the premiums and be able to receive disability insurance benefits for up to one year, which would replace a portion of their lost income due to a nonwork-related injury or illness or pregnancy. This bill is more important now than ever with the prevalence of so-called Long COVID.

I decided to investigate how we could provide short-term disability insurance for federal employees after learning that many of them already buy short-term disability insurance as individuals in the private market at high individual rates. Although federal employees have good health insurance, federal health benefits do not replace lost income if employees are unable to work. Moreover, while federal employees may have available sick or annual leave days, they may not have enough such days to pay the bills if they have to be out of work for an extended period, such as following surgery. Although there are long-term disability options for federal employees who become permanently disabled, federal employees do not qualify for such benefits until they have worked for the federal government for at least 18 months. This bill does no more than put federal employees in the same position as many of their private-sector counterparts, who often have access to disability insurance through an employer at group rates, an option unavailable to federal employees. This bill would prohibit participating insurance companies from excluding employees based on pre-existing conditions. Because of the federal government's purchasing power, this bill would provide these benefits at a lower rate than is available for employees purchasing as individuals, as many do. Under this bill, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management would contract with private carriers to provide this coverage, essentially providing the equivalent of group coverage available to many workers in the private sector.

According to the Social Security Administration, a 20-year-old worker has a one-in-four chance of becoming disabled by retirement age. The majority of disabilities are not caused by major accidents, but by injuries or illnesses, such as back injuries or cancer, according to the Council for Disability Awareness.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MR. ROBERT DITTMER

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Robert Dittmer. Mr. Dittmer, who passed away at the age of 103, leaves behind an indelible legacy of service to his country and the Solano County Community.

Born in Oakland, California in 1920, Mr. Dittmer was a lifelong resident of Northern California. As America entered World War II, Mr. Dittmer's commitment to his country led him to join the United States Army Air Corps. He flew 35 successful combat missions over Germany, ultimately becoming a Second Lieutenant and earning an Air Medal for his service.

As the war ended, Mr. Dittmer's service to others continued. He joined the fire service and became the Assistant Chief of the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base Fire Department. In 1956, Mr. Dittmer was awarded a commendation for entering the burning wreckage of a crashed aircraft and saving the life of the injured crew.

After retiring from the Fire Department, Mr. Dittmer continued to serve his community, advancing efforts to identify and address unmet needs in Solano County. He facilitated local real-estate ventures to bolster the local economy and was a critical leader within the downtown Fairfield business community.

Mr. Dittmer will be remembered not only for his decades of service to his country and the Solano County community but also for his genuine spirit of selflessness and innovation. He impacted the lives of countless members of his community, and his steadfast leadership undeniably enhanced the lives of his fellow Solano County residents.

Mr. Dittmer's enduring spirit will live on in his son, daughter, four grandchildren, and the community he dedicated his life to serving. I want to extend my deepest sympathy to Mr. Dittmer's loved ones. I know they and the people of Solano County join me in celebrating his life and legacy.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTH- DAY OF MR. HILBERT MARGOL

HON. RICHARD MCCORMICK

OF GEORGIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, today, I pay tribute to the incredible service and life of Mr. Hilbert "Hibby" Margol of Dunwoody, Georgia. Mr. Margol is a World War II veteran and, this

month, I join his friends and family in celebrating his 100th birthday.

Mr. Hilbert Margol was born on February 22, 1924, just 10 minutes before his identical twin brother, Howard. The two brothers attended the University of Florida and were drafted into the U.S. Army in 1944. They were inseparable until they were assigned to different infantry divisions.

In 1942, the military instituted a policy of separating siblings when assigned to military units or ships. Their mother, Mrs. Margol, took matters into her own hands and wrote a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt requesting the U.S. Army make an exception for her sons to be placed together. Her plea was successful, and the brothers were back together again.

The pair were assigned to the U.S. Army 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division, 392nd Field Artillery Battalion, as Howitzers gunners. Seven months after D-Day, the Margol brothers arrived in Europe. As their unit moved toward Munich, Germany, they happened upon a fence at the end of a rural two-lane road. They quickly realized they had stumbled upon a massive, almost industrial-looking complex. It was Dachau, the first Nazi Concentration Camp.

As Mr. Margol searched the area, he found dozens of railroad cars loaded with piles of human remains. He documented the horrors of Dachau with a Brownie camera. These photographs are on display at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

After the war, the brothers earned their degrees from the University of Florida in 1948 and married their wives in the same year. Hilbert moved to Atlanta in 1987 with his wife, Betty Ann, and they have lived there ever since.

Mr. Margol is a Jewish American hero and a liberator, and he turns 100 years old on February 22, 2024. May America and the great State of Georgia be forever blessed with patriots like Hilbert Margol. His service to our Nation is a debt we can never truly repay.

HONORING SHERIFF RICHARD BERDNIK

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a remarkable public servant who dedicated his life to law enforcement, Sheriff Richard Berdnik. Sheriff Berdnik served twenty-eight years with the Clifton Police Department. After his time with the City of Clifton, he joined the County of Passaic as the Commander of the Juvenile Division and the SWAT Team. On January 1, 2011, Richard was elected to the role of Passaic County Sheriff. A prominent leader among law enforcement, Sheriff Berdnik was also a member of the FBI National Academy Associates, the New Jersey Honor Legion of Decorated Officers, and the International Chiefs of Police Association.

A native of Clifton, New Jersey, Richard Berdnik graduated from Clifton High School, the New Jersey State Police Academy, FBI National Academy, and FBI National Executive Institute. Sheriff Berdnik took criminal justice

courses at Seton Hall University, the University of Virginia, and Caldwell College. Sheriff Berdnik's legacy embodies the principle of service over self. His impact is woven into the fabric of the Ninth Congressional District, exemplified by the officers he mentored, and the countless individuals he helped.

Beyond his professional achievements, Sheriff Berdnik was a beloved figure in our community. He was a Parishioner and Eucharistic Minister at Saint Andrew's Church in Clifton, New Jersey. As a proud member of the Polish community, Sheriff Berdnik served as the Marshal for the Passaic-Clifton & Vicinity Contingent in the Pulaski Day Parade in 2011 and was the Grand Marshal of the Pulaski Day Parade in New York City in 2014.

Known for his unwavering commitment to justice and the well-being of the public, Sheriff Berdnik served as a beacon of bravery and compassion. Under his leadership, Richard emphasized the importance of community engagement and proactive policing in order to build trust with the residents of Passaic County. His innovative approach undertook a complete top to bottom review of the department effectively streamlining operations within the Patrol, Corrections and Courthouse Divisions.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, friends, family, and the residents of New Jersey in recognizing Sheriff Richard Berdnik for his outstanding contributions to law enforcement and beyond. I thank Sheriff Berdnik. He was a mentor, a friend, and a pillar in our community. God bless his soul and may his wife Monica, and four children Ashley, Ryan, Alyssa, and Kevin stand proud.

RECOGNIZING THOMAS H. NEALE,
CRS ANALYST

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and service of Thomas Holleran Neale, a specialist at the Congressional Research Service who served Congress for over 53 years until his death this year. Tom was born in 1943 and grew up in Auburn, New York. He attended Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, Syracuse University, and the Université of Dijon. At CRS, he served countless members of Congress and committees with his expertise in American elections, political history, and constitutional theory.

Tom was a public servant, an active member of the community, and a faithful Catholic. He served as a member of community organizations including serving as president of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants. He contributed writings to *Wilson Quarterly*, the *Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, and the *Encyclopedia of the United States in the 19th Century*. He lectured on American elections at Meridian International, the Organization of American States, and the House of Representatives' Parliamentary Development Task Force and its House Democracy Partnership. And on behalf of the State Department, he lectured at the Foreign Press Center in Washington, the U.S. Embassy in Austria and several Austrian universities, and the Egyptian Parliament and the American University in Cairo. He served Congress well and was rec-

ognized by many of his colleagues as an outstanding scholar and a dear friend to many. On behalf of all of Congress, I want to thank Tom for his enduring service to this institution.

HONORING THE CITY OF PASSAIC

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with immense pride and joy to recognize a significant milestone as the City of Passaic celebrates its 150th anniversary. Since the city's incorporation in 1873, Passaic has evolved from a humble settlement into a vibrant and diverse urban center that stands as a beacon of progress. This historic achievement is a testament to the resilience, growth, and community spirit that have defined the City of Passaic over the past century and a half.

The industrious spirit of Passaic's residents has been the driving force behind its success. From the early days of fabric mills to the present, the people of Passaic have worked together to build a city that fosters innovation, economic prosperity, and cultural diversity. Let us reflect on the rich history, enduring spirit, and remarkable growth as we commemorate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the City of Passaic.

The Lenni-Lenape Native Americans are the earliest recorded inhabitants of the area situated in the City of Passaic. The Lenni-Lenape were met by Hartman Michielsen Vreeland, a Dutch settler and trader, who purchased Dundee Island and Pulaski Park along the Passaic River on April 4, 1678. The Dutch settlement expanded its land through further deeds and purchases over the next decade. In 1693, the Dutch settlement incorporated as the Township of Acquackanonk as part of northern Essex County.

The Township of Acquackanonk was later moved to Passaic County after being formed in 1837 by combining parts of northern Essex County and western Bergen County. In 1869 the Township of Acquackanonk officially changed its name to the City of Passaic. As the area experienced population and commercial growth, community members voted to incorporate as the City of Passaic in 1873.

Following the incorporation, the City of Passaic experienced an industrial boom fueled by immigration from European countries. By the late 19th century, critical developments such as the construction of the Erie Railroad helped Passaic become an economic hub with flourishing manufacturing and commerce. The city established a diverse economy with a thriving textile industry producing silk and cotton.

Today, there are nearly 70,000 residents that call the City of Passaic their home. The city has a large immigrant population and is a melting pot evident through the array of multicultural businesses, restaurants, and community events. Throughout Passaic's history, community leaders and residents played a key role in shaping Passaic into the exceptional city we celebrate today. One of Passaic's most notable figures is Mayor Hector C. Lora. His leadership and wisdom continue to guide the City of Passaic through all challenges, always emerging stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, friends, family, and the residents of

New Jersey in recognizing the 150th anniversary of the City of Passaic. I take this opportunity to congratulate the residents of Passaic on this historic milestone. May this celebration serve as a moment to honor the past, revel in the present, and look forward to a future filled with continued growth, prosperity, and fortitude.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF MARY LOUISE ORTA

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mary Louise Orta as her family gathers to remember her life and the many people she touched along the way.

Mary Louise Orta was the matriarch of the Orta Family. She was born in New Braunfels, Texas on November 13, 1931. She met and married Albert Orta in 1949 and began their life together in Texas before moving to California in 1973.

Mrs. Orta was a military spouse who exemplified the virtues of family, commitment, and service. She supported her husband Albert's career as he served our nation in the United States Air Force, then as an employee of the Department of Defense while traveling to several countries until his retirement in 1980. During this time, Mary remained home and continued her own life of service by supporting his career and raising their 12 children.

In 1981, at age 50, as her youngest child entered kindergarten, Mrs. Orta joined the workforce volunteering at the local school. Soon thereafter, she was hired by the Elk Grove Unified School District as a full-time employee at Valley High School in Sacramento County where she remained until her retirement in 2001. She was a tireless contributor to her school community, always first to volunteer and never wavered when asked to help. Throughout her twenty-year career, Mrs. Orta received several recognitions and was honored by the California State Senate and at districtwide ceremonies for her many contributions to staff, school administration, and students at Valley High School.

Mary Orta was a remarkable woman. She was a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She enjoyed the simple pleasures of life, finding joy in the company of family and close friends. She proudly walked with school administration at high school graduations, supported her children and grandchildren at events and family gatherings. Her unwavering love for those she cared for was her driving force and her faith, kindness and compassion will undoubtedly be a continuing source of strength for her family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mary Louise Orta as her family gathers to honor her incredible life and legacy.