

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.

# TRIBUTE TO THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAI T POGROM

**HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2024*

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 36th anniversary of the pogrom against the Armenian residents of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. From February 27 to 29, 1988, Azerbaijani mobs assaulted and killed Armenians, leaving dozens of Armenian civilians dead and hundreds injured. Women and girls were raped, and some victims were burned alive after being tortured and beaten. Those who survived the carnage fled their homes and businesses, leaving behind all but the clothes on their backs.

In a pattern all too familiar to the Armenian people, the Azerbaijani authorities made little effort to punish those responsible, instead attempting to cover up the atrocities in Sumgait to this day, as well as denying the role of senior government officials in instigating the violence.

In the years that followed this unspeakable massacre, Armenians living in Kirovabad, Baku, and Maragha suffered a similar fate. These pogroms were part of a pattern of hateful, racist anti-Armenian propaganda and activities occurring throughout Azerbaijan, dehumanizing its Armenian residents, and laying the groundwork for decades of aggression and mass violence. This brutality culminated when the Azerbaijani government initiated war against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh.

Beginning on September 27, 2020, and over 44 days, Azerbaijani forces invaded and murdered innocent Armenians in Artsakh and displaced tens of thousands more. They continued to terrorize the people of Artsakh in subsequent military attacks, and by blocking the Lachin Corridor—which left 120,000 people without access to food, water, medical supplies and services, gas, and electricity for over 9 months. On September 19, 2023, the Aliyev regime took full advantage of a people they had systematically starved, and launched a large-scale attack, further escalating their ethnic cleansing and genocidal campaign against the indigenous Armenian people of Artsakh. At least 200 people were killed, 400 wounded, over 100,000 ethnic Armenians were forcibly displaced, and Azerbaijan now holds Artsakh's political and military leadership, civilians, and prisoners of war hostage. With no help from the international community to confront Azerbaijan's military aggression, Artsakh was forced to negotiate under duress and consequently agreed to dissolve their democratically elected government.

There is also real and growing concern that Aliyev has his eyes set on land beyond Artsakh and will continue to seek further territory and concessions from Armenia by force. To this day, Azerbaijani forces remain present on sovereign Armenian land, in violation of Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and last month, President Aliyev made alarming remarks, including his refusal to remove troops from Armenian territory. These are the horrific consequences when aggression and hatred grow unchecked and when Aliyev's hostility is met with deafening silence, emboldening him to continue, and expand, his

unprovoked attacks on the Armenian people, knowing there will be no repercussions.

Azerbaijan's campaign of death and destruction against Armenians have been nothing short of deplorable, including the destruction of religious and cultural sites in Artsakh to erase or falsify history, and the torture, mutilation and killing of Armenian civilians, prisoners of war and soldiers. This February also marks 20 years of a horrific crime when Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani army captain savagely murdered an Armenian army lieutenant, Gurban Margaryan with an axe while he slept. The two were participating in a NATO Partnership for Peace exercise at the time in Hungary. In 2012, Safarov was sent home to Azerbaijan, purportedly to serve out the remainder of his sentence. Instead, he was pardoned, promoted, and paraded through the streets of Baku as a returning hero. There is no more dramatic illustration of Azerbaijan's continued posture of hatred towards their Armenian neighbor than their celebration of a cold-blooded murderer.

Though the United States and international partners have condemned Azerbaijan's aggression and military assault against Armenians, the time for strong statements alone has clearly long passed. Condemnation must be followed by real consequences. The United States must hold Azerbaijan and its leadership accountable and take concrete action and press Azerbaijan to return to compliance with international law and order. Crimes against humanity cannot be ignored and cannot go unanswered.

The United States must use its immense bully pulpit to apply direct pressure to the Aliyev regime in Azerbaijan, by enforcing restrictions on additional military assistance to Baku pursuant to Section 907 and calling on Azerbaijan to immediately return all Armenian POWs, hostages, and other detainees, and provide information on the status of those still be detained or missing. Additionally, the Biden Administration should immediately implement sanctions under the Magnitsky Act against Azeri officials responsible for human rights abuses.

The United States must also demand an immediate withdrawal of Azeri forces from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, provide security assistance to Armenia including expanding humanitarian aid to assist Artsakh refugees, and help ensure the safety and security of Armenians who seek to return to their homes in Artsakh. Finally, the U.S. Department of State must continue to call attention to the destruction and desecration of Armenian religious and cultural sites by Azerbaijan, and urge their safeguarding and preservation. Only by using every diplomatic tool at their disposal, including sanctions, against Azerbaijan can we help guarantee the safety, security and continued territorial integrity of Armenia.

As we pause to remember the innocent victims of the pogroms, we are also reminded that despite the trials the Armenian people have faced, it has not broken their faith, determination, and their will to survive in the face of constant threats from Azerbaijan. Today, let us recommit ourselves to doing everything we can to bring peace and justice to our Armenian brothers and sisters abroad, once and for all.

# HONORING HEB ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

**HON. BETH VAN DUYNE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2024*

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the following students who received HEB ISD Education Foundation's Award of Excellence in their respective fields of study: Aiden Aguirre, Isaiah Arellano, Matthew Boyd, Andrew Brooks, Dayton Crenshaw, Alexia Del Vecchio, Julie Eisermann, Anastasia Fike, Charles Fultz, Lauren Galkantas, Rafael Garcia, Orinda Dreshaj, Chloe Harmon, Ethan Hildebrand, Giselle Hill, Emma Hiros, Jacquelyn Holisinger, Mia Jax, Jayla King, Sagar Lamichhane, Ali Landreth, Jude Langsdorf, Mary McColm, Kyliya Murphy, Dorine Ngara, Maddox Olatunde, Claire Payne, Valerie Reyes, Jerry Rivera, Julissa Rodriguez, Avery Vignali, Kassidy Zastrow, and Zecharias Zewdie. I'm inspired by these students' hard work, and I wish them the best of luck in the future.

# HONORING THE LATE DR. CLINTON BATTLE

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2024*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Dr. Clinton Battle.

Born in the 1920s, Dr. Clinton Battle was known for his remarkable medical service to Indianola, Mississippi that contributed to the medical field where he earned nationwide recognition.

In the 1950s Dr. Battle received national press for his renowned delivery of first conjoined Siamese twins to ever be successfully separated.

Outside of the medical field, Battle helped to revive the local chapter of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), helping over 100 African Americans register to vote.

He always inspired African Americans to rise during the Jim Crow era. Because of this contribution to civil rights and medicine, Dr. Clinton Battle has been named a recipient of the Civil Rights Trail Marker as a trailblazer for Civil Rights and his medical accomplishments.

Dr. Battle's legacy and his contribution to medicine will continue to transcend time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the late Dr. Clinton Battle for his dedication to medicine and Civil Rights.

# HONORING HUSEYIN BAYRAM

**HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2024*

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an esteemed and invaluable member of New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District,