

dedication to honoring the values of service and sacrifice exemplifies what it truly means to be a patriot.

Raised in West, Texas, Joseph Robert signed his delayed enlistment forms in December 1977, before graduating high school in the spring of 1978. He attended IT training at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois and graduated from the Aerospace Ground Support Technician School before reporting to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma. In 1979, Joseph underwent advanced training on the MVP 116A Generator and became the only service member to receive a letter of certification as an engineer from Consolidated Diesel Company of Connecticut.

In October 1979, Joseph was deployed to South Korea, where his service qualified him for the South Korean Defense Medal. He was also awarded Airman of the Quarter for his branch in 1980 and became the inaugural Tactical Air Command 552nd AWACS Airman Maintenance Professional of the Year. Joseph's tour ended in August 1982. He began working to repair ground support equipment in 1986 but was laid off in July 1991 after suffering an injury that ended his service career.

Joseph's civilian service began soon after. After working through his recovery, he became a volunteer First Responder for the Prairie Hill Volunteer Fire Department and Mart Emergency Medical Service, where he earned his EMT Basic certification. In 2009, Joseph faced another medical setback when he suffered a stroke, again affecting his ability to serve in active capacities. However, his desire to serve his community remained strong. In 2012, he became an MVPN volunteer with the Veterans One Stop in Waco, and from 2014 to 2017, he administered the Mexia Peer Support Center. He has held several leadership positions at the local VFW Post 4964 in Mexia, including Adjutant, Senior Vice, Quartermaster, and Commander, and he currently serves as the Service Officer for American Legion Post 288. Joseph also works with Veterans Partners of Texas, where he helps clothe, feed, and assist veterans daily.

Joseph's military and civilian service career has been long and impactful, earning him numerous awards, including the Army Service Ribbon, Marksman Qualification Badge (M-16), Maintenance Professional of the Year, Male MVPN Volunteer of the Year, Veteran Volunteer of the Year, and a certificate of appreciation as a Veteran of Foreign Wars. Joseph served his country in the Air Force and returned home to serve his community, continually seeking to offer his services in any capacity he can.

I am pleased to award retired USAF Staff Sergeant Joseph Jesse Robert with a Congressional Veteran Commendation from the 17th Congressional District of Texas.

RECOGNIZING THE SACRED HEART COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of myself and Representatives ANNA ESHOO, RO KHANNA, and JIMMY PANETTA to recognize Sacred Heart Community Services

Agency for 60 years of working to create a community free from poverty by creating hope, opportunity, and action.

Sacred Heart Community Services Agency was founded in 1964 by Louise Benson, someone I knew as a faith-filled person who committed her time and energy to the wellbeing of the poor. Today Sacred Heart delivers essential safety net services to individuals and families in need. The organization has evolved into a respected and innovative provider of programs that assist families with achieving lifelong economic self-sufficiency and impressive grassroots organizing that addresses the root causes and consequences of poverty.

For 60 years, Sacred Heart has stood with integrity and served with compassion to empower individuals and families to reach better lives. We celebrate their many accomplishments and wish them continued success.

HONORING THE 2024 HERZOG FOUNDATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR FROM IOWA

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate an exceptional educator, Julie Pickard, on being named the 2024 Herzog Foundation's Teacher of the Year. Representing the great state of Iowa, Julie's dedication to the academic and spiritual growth of her students exemplifies the values of Christian education. Her work is a shining example of the impact one teacher can have on shaping future generations, not only through the curriculum but through faith and character.

Julie has spent her career ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education, rooted in both knowledge and integrity. Her passion for teaching, coupled with her unwavering commitment to serving her community, makes her truly deserving of this national recognition. This prestigious award speaks to the respect and admiration she has earned from her colleagues, students, and the wider educational community.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to commend Julie Pickard for her incredible accomplishments. On behalf of the people of Iowa, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and wish her continued success in shaping young minds and hearts for years to come.

RECOGNIZING SAM SORBO

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sam Sorbo, who was named a 2024 She Leads Woman of Distinction.

Sam Sorbo is an education freedom advocate. After an award-winning Hollywood film career as an actor, producer, and writer of "Just Let Go," "Let There be Light," and "Left Behind." Sam stepped back from her Hollywood career to homeschool her three small

children, when she realized there is more to education than the school system accomplishes or addresses.

Sam scripted and produced "School's Out with Sam Sorbo" for EpochTV and currently hosts "The Sam Sorbo Show" daily on Patriot.TV and as a podcast. Seeking to emancipate families from modern schooling, Sam wrote and produced "The Playbook for Home Learning," a 15-video training with a workbook for parents.

Fluent in five languages, Sam speaks internationally on how to "Educate . . . differently."

She has written several books including books on education, "They're YOUR Kids" and "Teach from Love." "Words for Warriors" addresses the dangerous shifts in our vernacular and "True Faith," was written in collaboration with her husband, Kevin Sorbo. Remarking on the lack of Biblical study in our government's schools, Sam notes, "How can anyone claim to educate while ignoring the most important book in the history of the world?"

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating this outstanding woman of distinction.

HONORING BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark Building Safety Month 2024 and to recognize the more than 60,000 members of the International Code Council (ICC)—including the more than 8,300 in California—who have dedicated their livelihoods to ensuring public safety throughout the built environment.

Building Safety Month is sponsored each and every May by the International Code Council and its partners, with a shared goal of reminding the public about why buildings are safe, resilient, efficient, and livable.

The Code Council—celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year—brings together local, state, and federal government stakeholders, as well as those from the private sector every three years to develop model codes and standards that protect the occupants of the buildings in which we live, work, and play. Those codes and standards are then adopted, implemented, and enforced year-round at varying levels of government across the nation. Building safety officials, the fire service, architects, engineers, builders, and other skilled tradespeople all use these codes and standards to ensure the safe construction and maintenance of buildings.

This is particularly important in California, a state that faces numerous natural hazards: atmospheric rivers, wildfires, riverine floods, mudslides, record snowfalls, extreme heat, and earthquakes. Often, depending on the time of year, the buildings in which we spend our time are at risk from multiple natural threats.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking International Code Council Board for their enduring commitment to safe construction, and in particular, ICC Board President Stuart Tom; ICC Chief Executive Officer Dominic Sims; the

Code Council's elected leadership; and its more 60,000 Members and staff as they commemorate Building Safety Month 2024 and work to raise public awareness to the importance of building safety across our Nation.

THANKING SUSAN M. KOZUBSKI
FOR HER SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Ranking Member Morelle and myself, please join me in congratulating Susan M. Kozubski who is retiring after 21 years of service to the People's House and with more than 30 years of overall federal service. Susan currently serves as the Assistant Chief Administrative Director for Finance and Administration in the Office of Inspector General.

Ms. Kozubski began her service in 1984 working for the European Special Activities Area of the Department of the Air Force in Germany. During her time in Germany, Susan also worked in the 18th Military Intelligence Battalion of the Army, was the executive secretary to the Battalion Commander of the 6–40th Armor Battalion, Berlin Brigade, U.S. Army Berlin, and the executive secretary to the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Berlin.

Susan returned to the United States in 1993, started working in the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and then as the executive secretary for the Director of the Non-Developmental Airlift Aircraft System Program Office. For her work in the Program Office, she was awarded the Air Force Award of Excellence in Acquisition Management.

Ms. Kozubski joined the House Inspector General's Office in 2000 as the administrative assistant. She advanced into higher-level positions in the Office as the secretary, executive secretary, and administrative director. Susan worked on several special projects, including representing the Office on the House Officers' and IG's Human Resources Task Force.

In 2007, Ms. Kozubski returned to Europe and worked for the U.S. Embassies in Poland and Montenegro. In Warsaw, Susan worked in the Visa Fraud section as a consular associate. During that time, she exposed a visa fraud ring operating between New York and Belarus, earning her the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Award. In Montenegro, she was the Community Liaison Officer, helping acclimatize new embassy staff and their families with aspects of living in the host country.

Susan returned to the United States in 2010 and re-joined the House Inspector General's Office in 2010 as the Assistant Director for Finance and Administration. During this time, she worked on several projects and implemented programs and procedures to increase efficiencies in the administrative functions and operations. For example, she led the team to revise the Performance Management Program, led the team that developed the first Succession Planning Program, and chaired the House Officers' and IG's Human Resource Task Force several times. Notably, Susan is the first, and currently only person to be awarded the Employee Excellence Award twice, first in 2019 and again in 2023.

Congratulations and thanks to Ms. Susan M. Kozubski for her dedication and leadership serving our Nation for over 30 years.

RECOGNIZING DENTON'S INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS CEMETERY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Denton IOOF Cemetery and the Ribbon Cutting ceremony denoting a long-overdue correction to the property's deed, formally eliminating the prohibition for the burial of Black individuals in the cemetery. This is a significant and important day for the Denton community in formally acknowledging the rights and worth of all community members, regardless of race.

I would like to thank Mayor Gerard Hudspeth for raising the issue so the City of Denton could do the necessary research and legal work to eliminate the codified restrictions in the deed's provisions. Denton county has a rich African American history, which serves as an important cornerstone for the flourishing and prosperity community we recognize today.

The elimination of this restriction aligns the IOOF Cemetery's stated value of "elevating mankind's character" with Denton's shared commitment in honoring the innate human value of its citizens and ensures that all cemetery visitors and their loved ones are recognized as equal in both practice and in code. I am honored to recognize this ribbon cutting ceremony.

CONGRATULATING PARALYMPIAN CHRIS HAMMER

HON. HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Chris Hammer for winning a gold medal at the 2024 Paris Paralympics.

At 38 years old, Chris Hammer dedicated over half his life to achieving his Paralympic dreams. He began his athletic journey at a young age, where he quickly discovered a passion for long-distance running. In 2004, Chris began his collegiate career at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in West Michigan. There, he earned five All-American honors—once in cross country and four times in steeplechase. In 2022, he was inducted into GVSU's Athletic Hall of Fame.

Following his success at GVSU, Chris joined the 2012 U.S. Paralympic Team in London, competing in the 1500-meter, marathon, and 800-meter track events. He then competed in the PT4 paratriathlon at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and the PST5 paratriathlon at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, finishing fourth in both events.

In Paris, Chris finished the men's PTS5 paratriathlon in just 58 minutes and 44 seconds, winning the gold medal for his outstanding performance. We are honored that Chris called the great state of Michigan home for so many years, and applaud his commitment, drive, and persistence throughout his athletic career.

Mr. Speaker, once more I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Mr. Chris

Hammer's first gold medal victory. I congratulate Chris on his well-earned success, and hope he finds some time to celebrate this incredible feat alongside his teammates, family, and community.

RECOGNIZING CORPORAL LUIS JESUS LOPEZ, USMC, RETIRED, WITH A CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor retired USMC Corporal Luis Jesus Lopez, of Waco, Texas, by presenting him with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His dedication to his Country and fellow men serves as a template for American Exceptionalism.

Born and raised in Texas, Luis Lopez answered the call to serve by enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in February 1969, during the escalating conflict of the Vietnam War. Throughout his four years of active duty, he was deployed to Vietnam, where he faced the perils of enemy fire on the battlefield with unwavering courage. In one particularly harrowing encounter, Corporal Lopez and his squad came under intense attack. Amid the chaos, he exhibited extraordinary bravery and selflessness. Alongside a corpsman and another Marine, he worked tirelessly to load two radiomen onto a helicopter, shielding them from lifethreatening enemy fire. One of the radiomen had already made the ultimate sacrifice, but Corporal Lopez upheld the sacred duty to never leave a fallen comrade behind. His actions that day not only saved lives but also exemplified the highest ideals of honor and brotherhood.

Corporal Lopez's distinguished service is reflected in the numerous awards and honors he has received, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal, and the Rifle Sharpshooter Badge. In his civilian life, Luis Lopez has remained a pillar of his community. He is an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Marine Corps League, and the American Legion in Waco. Through these organizations and his personal efforts, he consistently strives to support and assist his fellow veterans. His unwavering commitment to service extends beyond official capacities, making him an invaluable member of the community who continues to enrich the lives of others. Even in retirement, Corporal Lopez has dedicated himself to serving others, just as he did during his military career. His ongoing contributions to his fellow veterans and his community stand as a testament to his character and the values he embodies. It is with profound honor and respect that I award retired USMC Corporal Luis Jesus Lopez with a Congressional Veteran Commendation.