

be retiring after an impressive 44-year tenure with the City of Robbinsdale. I wish to acknowledge his tireless efforts in the expansion of housing opportunities, his commitment to the public good, his stewardship of critical infrastructure initiatives, and his overall devotion to the city he serves.

Mayor Blonigan's service to Robbinsdale began in 1980, when he was first elected to the City Council. As his city manager wrote, "He has not left the dais since." After 10 consecutive terms as a City Council member, he ran to serve as the city's Mayor, winning the support of his constituents through active communication, strong relationships, and a desire to find common ground on the issues that impact Robbinsdale residents.

Over the last 44 years, Mayor Blonigan has been a steady hand in some of the most consequential initiatives in the city's history. He helped build new facilities for the Police Department and Fire Department in 1993 to ensure residents received a high quality of service from their public safety agencies. He drove historic investment in parks throughout the city, including the redevelopment of Robbinsdale's largest park, Lakeview Terrace Park, that included a playground, ball fields, walking paths, and access to Crystal Lake. He supported a new water filtration system for Crystal Lake that resulted in over 40,000 pounds of litter and pollution being removed. Most recently, he oversaw the construction of a new water treatment plant that went online in 2023 and a new water tower that went into service earlier this year. He prioritized an aggressive approach to caring for the city's 100+ year old infrastructure while ensuring residents were not overburdened by property taxes.

Mayor Blonigan's tenure is also defined by significant expansion of housing opportunities and successful economic development initiatives. He built strong relationships with intergovernmental committees, private entities, small businesses, and developers to drive this important work. During his time as Mayor, Robbinsdale saw multiple unused schools and dilapidated buildings redeveloped into housing, as well as the construction of multiple new market-rate apartment complexes and hundreds of new single-family homes supported by the city's Economic Development Authority. He encouraged an expansion of North Memorial Hospital—one of the largest hospitals in the state—and a full-service grocery store down the street from it. He coordinated investment in Robbinsdale's historic downtown, ensuring it is vibrant for future generations.

At the heart of Mayor Blonigan's service is his unwavering commitment to the public good. In 2011, the City created a Domestic Partner Registry to recognize same-sex partnerships in advance of statewide marriage legalization in 2012. He was a supporter of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives long before they became common practice in municipal governments. He led nearby cities in creating a process to remove racial covenants from their land and home titles to help us heal from generations of racist redlining. He joined cities across the state in declaring a climate emergency, leading to the creation of Robbinsdale's Energy Action Plan to help the city and its residents fight the climate crisis.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege to honor and thank Mayor Blonigan for his service to the City of Robbinsdale. His leadership should be an example to all public servants.

RECOGNIZING ABBY JOHNSON

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

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

Abby Johnson is a strong advocate for life from the womb to the tomb and beyond. She went to work for Planned Parenthood believing she would be helping women. After working her way up from volunteer to director of one of their facilities, and even winning Planned Parenthood's employee of the year award, Abby had a surprising change of heart after witnessing a live ultrasound guided abortion procedure. It became clear in that moment that abortion did not provide the freedom she had promised so many women in those counseling rooms. Abortion only caused harm, destruction and devastation. Upon that realization, Abby left her job in the abortion industry and has been sharing her experiences ever since.

Her story was chronicled in a best-selling book titled, "Unplanned," which was later turned into a major motion picture with the same name. She has written several other books, including "The Walls Are Still Talking" and "Fierce Mercy."

Abby is the CEO of two successful pro-life non-profits and hosts her own podcast, "Politely Rude." One of her ministries, "And Then There Were None," has helped almost 700 abortion workers leave the abortion industry and come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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

HONORING ELIZABETH BROWNE

HON. KATHERINE M. CLARK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elizabeth Browne for her dedicated service to the health and wellbeing of her neighbors in and around Waltham, Massachusetts.

Ms. Browne has been a pillar of our community. She began working with Charles River Community Health in 2003 and has spent the past fifteen years serving as its Executive Director and CEO.

For over two decades, she has devoted her time, talents, and energy to the staff and patients of Charles River Community Health.

Founded in 1974, Charles River Community Health is a vital resource to the people of Allston-Brighton, Waltham, and surrounding areas. They are focused on delivering comprehensive, integrated, and equitable primary health care for a diverse group of individuals and families.

Under her leadership, Charles River Community Health expanded its physical space, grew its dedicated staff, and strengthened its capacity to deliver high-quality service to more patients—ensuring continuity of care at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Browne has dedicated her life to community-based care and has worked diligently to increase access and improve health outcomes for families in Waltham and across the Commonwealth.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to Liz for her career of service to the Commonwealth and wish her the best in her next chapter.

RECOGNIZING SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER WALTER MILLER LAVENDER, USN, 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 USN Senior Chief Petty Officer Walter Miller Lavender, of Lorena, Texas, by presenting him with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His remarkable accomplishments reflect a life dedicated not only to the greater good but also to his community and his country, exemplifying the values that define true patriotism.

Walter began his journey at Cisco Junior College on a football scholarship and gained recognition as an award-winning boxer. He later transferred to Midwestern State University but chose in 1961 to enlist in the United States Navy, answering a higher call to serve.

Trained as a medic, he was first stationed in Guam, where he honed his medical skills and survived the devastating Super Typhoon Karen in 1962. His resilience and commitment were further demonstrated during two tours in Vietnam. In 1965, as a Combat Medic with the 7th Marines near Quy Nhon, he provided critical care to wounded soldiers under fire. In 1970, aboard the helicopter carrier USS *Iwo Jima*, he was responsible for evacuating casualties, ensuring that injured service members received timely medical attention.

Walter also served aboard the USS *Dewey* and the USS *Ward*, showcasing versatility and leadership across multiple assignments. After over 22 years of distinguished service, he retired in 1983 as a Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman from the Marine Corps Reserve in Waco, Texas.

His exemplary service is reflected in the numerous decorations he received: the Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation, five Good Conduct Awards, the National Defense Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device, the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Gallantry Cross, and the Seventh Fleet "Shell Back" Recognition aboard the USS *Dewey*.

Following his military career, Walter continued to serve his community as a Radiologic Technologist in local hospitals until his retirement in 2014. He also served as a Municipal Court Judge in the 1980s, demonstrating his ongoing commitment to public service.

Today, he remains actively involved as the treasurer of the Heart of Texas Vietnam Veterans Association Chapter 1012 and serves as a health and wellness advisor and PTSD mentor at the Waco Veterans One-Stop and the Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network.

His dedication to supporting fellow veterans and their families highlights his belief in service beyond self.

Those who know Walter describe him as embodying the values of duty, honor, and country. His selfless commitment to helping others continues to inspire all who meet him.

To honor his sacrifice and service, I am pleased to award retired USN Senior Chief Petty Officer Walter Miller Lavender with a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

INTRODUCTION OF FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH RESOLUTION

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, since 2019, and as the Member of Congress with the most Filipino Americans of any U.S. House district nationwide, I have been honored to co-lead an annual resolution recognizing October as Filipino American History Month. I have joined many colleagues in doing so in order to recognize and celebrate the great contributions of Filipino Americans to our country, in government and law, music and entertainment, sports, business and countless other ventures.

The first recorded arrival of Filipinos in the continental United States took place on October 18, 1587, when the "Luzones Indios" came ashore from the Manila-built galleon *Nuestra Senora de Esperanza* in Morro Bay, California. This was followed by the first permanent Filipino settlement in the United States in St. Malo, Louisiana in 1763. Since those early beginnings, our Filipino American community has grown to approximately 4.4 million citizens and is the third largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group in the United States. Many of the early Filipino immigrants were young men who came to the United States, most to Hawaii, California, Washington and Alaska, seeking a better life.

This first generation of Filipino immigrants are commonly referred to as the Manong generation (Ilocano for first-born male). They worked mostly physically demanding jobs in tough conditions for very little pay. Over the years, they fought against discrimination, found a way forward, became respected members of their communities, and made a better future for themselves and their future generations. The several generations since have thrived upon that foundation.

The history of the Fil-Am community in Hawaii is particularly rich and echoes the national story. In 1906, the first fifteen sakada contract laborers arrived in Honolulu from the Philippines aboard the SS *Doric*, marking the first sustained immigration into our country and the humble beginnings of Fil-Ams in Hawaii. These first immigrants, those that followed and the subsequent generations eventually became trailblazers in politics and government, the military, business and entrepreneurship, journalism, popular culture, music and the arts and more.

Our resolution honors the tremendous and increasing contribution of Filipinos Americans to our country in all areas including music, dance, literature, education, health care, business, literature, journalism, sports, fashion,

politics, government, science, technology, the fine arts and other fields. To name just a few as examples, again from my Hawaii:

Domingo Los Banos was Hawaii's first Filipino American school principal and a loyal veteran of the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment that fought in the Philippines during World War II.

Carolina Dizon Wong broke a glass ceiling when she obtained an M.D. degree and became the first Filipino American to start a medical practice in Hawaii in 1952.

Peter Aduja became the first Fil-Am elected to public office in the United States when he was elected to the Hawaii Territorial House of Representatives in 1954.

Larry Ramos became the first Filipino and Asian-American to win a Grammy Award playing the banjo for the New Christy Minstrels in 1963.

Ines Cayaban was the first Filipino American graduate of the School of Public Health, Nursing and Social Work at the University of Hawaii. She received the prestigious Jefferson Award in 1986 for her service.

In 1994, Ben Cayetano was elected the Governor of Hawaii, becoming the first Filipino American governor of a state in our union.

In 2019, Roy Macaraeg became the first Fil-Am to become a general officer in the history of Hawaii's citizen soldier ranks.

In Hawaii, we also regularly honor the over 250,000 Filipinos nationwide who answered the call to protect and defend America and the Philippines in the Pacific theater. In 2016, President Obama signed into law the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act to bestow Congress's highest honor upon those veterans. With my colleagues in the House, I have introduced our Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, which seeks to reunite World War II Filipino soldiers with their children, so that we can honor those living in our community who fought to protect the free and open Indo-Pacific that we have today.

Each and all of these lives of achievement are but a small sampling of a broader community that has achieved so much and contributed so much to the rich fabric of our country. And the story of Filipino Americans is still in its early chapters.

It is fully appropriate that we again honor our Filipino American community whose story is a quintessentially American story.

CONGRATULATING CITY OF HOPE ON BEING NAMED A TOP 5 HOSPITAL FOR CANCER CARE

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate City of Hope's National Medical Center in Duarte, California on being recognized as one of the nation's top 5 hospitals for cancer care by the U.S. News & World Report's 2024–2025 rankings. In the same report, the center was also rated as high performing in six cancer procedures: lung cancer surgery, colon cancer surgery, prostate cancer surgery, gynecologic cancer surgery, gastroenterology and GI cancer surgery, and in the treatment of leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

City of Hope is the only freestanding National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehen-

sive Cancer Center in California that is not affiliated with a university. Their system in California includes the Duarte campus, a new cancer center in Orange County, and clinical locations across Southern California, along with cancer treatment centers and outpatient facilities in the Atlanta, Chicago, and Phoenix areas. City of Hope continues to be a national leader and innovator in a range of complex cancer types and innovative technologies, and because of them, hundreds of thousands of lives continue to be saved through these advances.

I know firsthand of the dedication and devotion that City of Hope is committed to offering all who are in need, particularly to those from traditionally underserved communities. It has been a trusted institution in Southern California, offering superior care to the community for many decades.

I congratulate City of Hope and all its staff on this well-deserved national recognition by U.S. World News & Reports, and I wish them continued success.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF DOMINGA BUSTAMANTE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Dominga Bustamante, an integral and cherished figure in the San Joaquin Valley. Dominga's journey began when her family migrated to California in her early childhood so they could work in agriculture. After settling in Dinuba, she went on to graduate from Dinuba Unified School District and met her high school sweetheart, Cruz Bustamante Jr., along the way.

Together, they moved to San Joaquin, California where the newlywed Mrs. Bustamante recognized the pressing needs of her new community. This prompted her to join AmeriCorps and serve as a VISTA volunteer so she could help families obtain their much-needed Social Security benefits. Dominga then stayed the path of serving others by becoming a CSO Organizer. From driving the elderly to their appointments to interacting with local and county officials, she remained dedicated to ensuring the citizens of San Joaquin and neighboring communities received fair and equitable rights.

Recognizing her passion for advocacy, Dominga diversified her efforts across various roles throughout the community including law enforcement interdiction advocate, bilingual instructional aide, certificated health provider, and social and political advocate. She supported the youth by serving as a teen anxiety first responder and advisor for the San Joaquin Teen Club.

She also became known for going above and beyond to welcome new Hindu and Sikh families to the community as an unofficial "Welcome Host." In recognition of these efforts and more, California Latina Leaders in Action honored Mrs. Bustamante with the prestigious "Lifetime Achievement Award" in 2002.

In addition to serving her community, Dominga also honored her faith as a beloved Catechism teacher for over 30 years. The Diocese of Fresno eventually acknowledged her