

for over six decades. It is a testament to our enduring commitment to our brave men and women in uniform, and it is proof that Republicans and Democrats can indeed continue to find common ground and provide for our collective defense.

Since I arrived in 2019 in Congress, I have had the privilege of serving on the Armed Services Committee, which oversees this defense bill, and it is truly one of the highlights of my career to serve on such a bipartisan committee. This idea of bipartisanship, putting country before party, is not new to me. It is indeed how I was raised.

As the daughter and granddaughter of naval aviators, it is not an exaggeration to say that my very earliest memories are on a military base. I was born at Patuxent River Naval Air Station just a few hours from here. When it was my turn to fulfill our commitment to our Nation, I served in the Air Force, but that, of course, did not come without challenges.

Now, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have shared not only my own challenges and those of my family who have been in uniform, but also those of my mother and my grandmother and countless other Pennsylvanians and Americans I have been able to talk to along the way. Sharing these stories helps make our military the greatest on Earth and make it even stronger.

For nearly a year, I have now had the privilege of serving as ranking member on our Military Quality of Life Panel alongside my very dear friend, Republican colleague Representative DON BACON from Nebraska. From inadequate pay to substandard housing conditions and to long wait times for essential services, it is very clear that we have enormous work to do to ensure that our military families have the support and resources that they need to thrive. That is why we proposed 31 different recommendations, and I will highlight just a few of them.

First and foremost, pay. We want pay that is competitive with our civilian economy, including a significant additional pay raise for junior enlisted, E-1 through E-4.

Second, housing. Our recommendation is to reverse the 5 percent reduction in BAH that was passed nearly a decade ago. BAH would now cover 100 percent of the calculated rate for military housing.

In a similar vein, third, we recommended funding facility budget requests at 100 percent of the maintenance and modernization requirements so that we are able to fully fund them.

Next and finally, childcare. The bill that we passed out of committee would cover childcare expenses for those who worked in our childcare development centers for their first child at a minimum. This would get more staff on the books, more open and available childcare slots, and reduce wait times.

Finally, on healthcare. Servicemembers won't need referrals any longer for

physical therapy, for nutrition, for women's health, for audiology, for optometry, and podiatry specialties.

Next, spousal employment. We will be supporting military spouses by expanding childcare access for them from 90 to 100 days while they are able to look for a job, and we are permanently expanding our partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

We have the greatest military in the world because of the people that wear the uniform and the families that support them, so we must take care of them. At the very least, we owe our military community a bill that is free from political drama and theater.

Unfortunately, we here on the floor are now seeing some very upsetting amendments being offered to a very bipartisan bill and potentially adding to this bill many poison pills, poison pills that will make it difficult for even me to vote for the final passage of the bill, even though there is so much goodness in it.

Here are just a few ideas of what we will be voting on today:

Banning Pride flags in workplaces and public areas in the Department of Defense.

This one is particularly absurd: Banning content related to certain animals that change their sex, like clown fish, and a range of education materials.

Thirdly, prohibiting the Secretary of Defense from paying or reimbursing expenses related to reproductive care, such as abortion services.

Fourth, eliminating any DEI, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, within the military and laying off everyone who is in those offices.

Finally, prohibiting all assistance to Ukraine, which, of course, would be a gift to Russia, China, Iran, and all of our adversaries. These are just some of the very nonserious efforts that we are seeing here on the floor. It is enormously frustrating to see these being added to this bill, which was such a bipartisan bill, voted out of committee 57-1.

Regardless of which amendments are passed, these are attacks against women, against the LGBTQ community, against diversity initiatives, and more. They will have a chilling effect on military recruitment and retention at a time when we are facing historic challenges to fill our all-volunteer ranks.

We, the Congress, need to knock this off. I proudly served in uniform, as did generations of my family before me, and I will do everything in my power to send a truly bipartisan bill to the President for signature. I very much look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in the House and Senate to do just that.

□ 1015

HONORING MARTIN ESCALANTE  
ORTIZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Martin Escalante Ortiz on his 100th birthday.

Martin is part of America's Greatest Generation. Born in 1924, Mr. Ortiz served in our Nation's United States Army during World War II. For his service, he received several medals for his service, including the Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

After the war, Martin returned home and cared for his younger siblings before he married his wife, Maria, in 1955. Together, they raised 10 children and built a legacy that includes 21 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

In the late 1950s, Martin moved to Orange County and joined our community.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Martin a happy birthday, and I thank him for his service to our country and to our community.

HONORING ESPIRIDION "SPEED" CASTILLO

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Espiridion Castillo, known in our community as Speed.

Speed was an Air Force veteran, cherished father, dedicated educator, and esteemed community leader.

How did he get the nickname "Speed"? He ran the 400-meter in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 50 seconds and covered 800 meters in 2 minutes.

Speed dedicated over 30 years of his life to Anaheim Union High School District as a teacher, counselor, truant officer, principal, and director of Federal projects. He also spent almost 50 years as a high school sports referee.

Speed often helped those in need, including students who couldn't afford the graduation expenses.

He leaves behind a lasting legacy and is survived by son, Michael; daughters, Michelle and Lisa; and three grandchildren.

I thank Speed for his service. We love him, and we will never forget him.

RECOGNIZING DR. CHRISTOPHER DOWNING

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of Anaheim Elementary School District Superintendent Dr. Chris Downing.

Dr. Downing dedicated the last 6 years of his career to leading the largest elementary school district in California, where he oversaw tremendous progress in science, arts, math, and music education.

Notably, Dr. Downing expanded learning opportunities and created after-school programs for our children. He made sure that our community was a leader in dual language programs, launching Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin programs for all of our students.

During Dr. Downing's tenure, our elementary school district won many Statewide recognitions, including the California Department of Education's Pivotal Practice Award for effectiveness during the pandemic.

Dr. Downing's 35 years as an educator have demonstrated his commitment to the education of our children.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Dr. Downing a happy retirement, and I congratulate and thank him.

# REMEMBERING DOMINGA BUSTAMANTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the life of a remarkable and loving woman, Dominga Reyes Bustamante, who recently passed away on May 20, 2024, at the age of 89.

Dominga Reyes Bustamante led a life full of service and charity that touched so many lives and today is worthy of praise. Her story initiated in Dinuba, California, the place her family decided to migrate to and work in the Central Valley's agriculture fields. She was a proud alum of the local Dinuba schools.

It was at Dinuba High School where she met her husband, Cruz Bustamante, Jr. Their love and desire to start their family took them to San Joaquin, California, the place that saw Dominga blossom into a social and cultural icon.

Dominga was a public servant without having any official title. She saw the need in her community and was moved to action.

She was a member of the Volunteers in Service to America program, VISTA, where she helped low-income families obtain their Social Security benefits. As a CSO organizer, she spent her days driving her community's elderly to nearby Fresno for their appointments, as well as interacting with local, city, and county officials and boards to ensure that the citizens of San Joaquin and the surrounding communities were given the fair and equitable rights they deserved.

Dominga formed the San Joaquin Teen Club, where she served as an adviser and teen anxiety first responder. She was a law enforcement interdiction advocate, a bilingual instructional aide, a certificated healthcare provider, and a social and political activist.

A devout Catholic, Dominga wanted to share her faith with others, so she taught catechism for many years in San Joaquin and Fresno.

Dominga's kind spirit extended to newcomers as she served as the unofficial welcome host to new Hindu and Sikh families moving into her community.

Throughout her public service and acts of goodwill, she never demanded anything in return, but her community took notice of her works and honored her while she was with us. In 2001, Fresno State University celebrated Dominga and her husband, Cruz, during their 25th annual Latino commencement as they paid tribute to all parents who guide and encourage their children to succeed. In 2002, Dominga received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the California Latina Leaders in Action in recognition of her long-term involvement in community empowerment and advocacy.

The Diocese of Fresno recognized her for more than 30 years of service as a

faithful minister of God's Word and presented her with the Bishop's Catholicist Appreciation Certificate.

All these accomplishments and accolades served as a perfect example for her six children as they, too, were inspired to a life of service.

Among them was Cruz Miguel Bustamante, who became the first Latino to serve as speaker of the California State Assembly and California's 45th Lieutenant Governor.

In her later years, Dominga stayed active and involved in the community by volunteering for the Fresno Food Bank and continuing as a catechism teacher for members of her congregation.

She took to caring for and maintaining her cactus garden, reading the latest Karen Kingsbury novel, and giving her time to friends and family. Her home served as the family gathering spot for holidays, birthdays, and tamale-making parties. She also became an accomplished seamstress and quilter and made sure each grandchild had their own special handmade blanket.

Although she is no longer with us, her kindness, love, faith, wisdom, and legacy will live on with the entire Bustamante family as she is survived by her six children, Cruz, Belinda, Dorothy, Ron, Andrew, and Naomi, her 13 grandchildren, and her 24 great-grandchildren.

With all my admiration, "rest in peace," "descanse en paz," Senora Dominga.

Dominga is a perfect example of a true American who gave of herself during her entire life and was selfless not only for her community but her country.

Once again, Dominga will live on forever in the hearts of many of us who she touched.

## MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Ms. Deirdre Kelly, one of his secretaries.

## CULTURE WARS IN THE NDAA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, the annual National Defense Authorization Act is the Pentagon's budget. It is perhaps one of the most important tasks we fulfill here in Congress, protecting our national security and taking care of servicemembers, their families, and their housing.

It has been one of the few places where we have bipartisan agreement despite what you see on TV. This year, the House Armed Services Committee again did their job and, on a bipartisan basis, passed the National Defense Authorization Act out of committee 57-1. That includes a bunch of investments for the quality of life of our military members and military families.

The bill was good to go when it left committee. Unfortunately, once it left committee, it was transformed into a document that my colleagues have turned into a culture war document.

Most disappointing is, despite my colleagues saying that they were good with overturning *Roe v. Wade* but then will leave it to the States to decide what to do beyond that, we are once again watching them try to strip away a basic right to provide reproductive healthcare to women in uniform. It is dividing us at a time when we should be coming together on national security challenges.

It says specifically that uniformed women do not have the right to get some time off to leave the State to get an abortion if they need it.

If you are forced to be based in Texas and get pregnant and don't want to be pregnant, they are trying to repeal that woman's right to take time off to travel to another State to get an abortion.

They also are trying to repeal the right for a servicewoman to take time off to help her daughter get an abortion in another State, not even a woman in uniform.

I am deeply disappointed in my colleagues' constant attempts to repeal a woman's right to choose. Again, in public they may say that they were good with *Roe*, that they are thrilled that *Roe* was overturned but now are leaving it alone. In this Congress alone, in the past year and a half, we have voted 15 times to strip a woman of the right to choose in some form or fashion. Sometimes it is the right to travel. Sometimes it is the right to medication. Sometimes it is the right to understand if a healthcare center is actually able to perform an abortion or not. It is misinformation. It is disinformation.

I am deeply disappointed that we are again in this place where my colleagues won't stop attacking a woman's right to choose, now including the rights of a woman in uniform, someone who is putting her life on the line to serve her country.

We have seen a ton of other divisive amendments come into the NDAA, something that should never be a place where we do culture wars. I am also very disappointed in the refusal of a very bipartisan amendment to be brought to the floor preserving our National Guard's tactical air capability that underwrites our national defense.

We asked, on a bipartisan basis, that the Pentagon show us their plan to recapitalize their aircraft as they bring down the number of planes that they have in the U.S. Air Force. We asked what their plan was.

If my colleagues are worried about conflicts with China, worried about issues abroad, for every two planes we are retiring, we are creating and initiating only one new plane to replace them.

Places like Selfridge Air National Guard Base, which are home to important fighter aircraft, don't know what