

them the most unselfish generation. When they came home, they carried forward the spirit of freedom that drove them to victory over the worst tyrants the world has ever known or confronted.

Those spirits triumphed because they understood what it took to preserve liberty. Thus far, our world has achieved the longest peacetime era among great powers in world history because of them.

#### RECOGNIZING MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD'S 1ST COMBINED ARMS BATTALION

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

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Minnesota National Guard's 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor Regiment, as they were recently awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation award, the Superior Unit Award, and the Presidential Unit Citation award. These awards are given to units for heroism and outstanding achievement under extraordinary circumstances.

We all remember the harrowing images of the evacuation of Afghanistan, which took place just 3 years ago. Thirteen American heroes lost their lives, and countless allies were left behind for the Taliban. If not for the 194th, things could have and would have been much worse.

During the evacuation of Kabul, the 1st Combined Arms Battalion rescued over 124,000 American citizens, government employees, and Afghan allies in under 15 days.

This Brainerd, Minnesota-based unit made a difference in the world. Because of them, families were reunited and lives were saved.

As the husband of the Minnesota Air National Guard 148th Fighter Wing's first female command chief, who deployed when she was called upon, I have long recognized the superiority of the Minnesota National Guard. I could not be more proud to represent these exemplary soldiers.

America is blessed to have such courageous patriots in her ranks, and we, in Minnesota, are lucky that they call our State home.

Madam Speaker, I thank the men and women of the 194th Armor Regiment for their service during this infamous time. God bless them all for their sacrifices, and God bless America.

#### OBSERVING ANNIVERSARY OF HAWAII FIRES

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

Ms. TOKUDA. Madam Speaker, on August 8, Hawaii gathered to observe the 1-year anniversary of the fires on Maui and in Lahaina.

Today, as Congress reconvenes, I rise to honor and remember the family and

friends that we lost. They are beloved mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, grandparents and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, friends and life partners. Their ages span almost a century, from our youngest "child," "keiki," just 7 years old, to a cherished "elder," "kupuna," aged 97.

Many have lived their entire lives in Lahaina. Others chose to make Lahaina their home, having come from faraway places across the United States and abroad, like the Philippines, Mexico, and Scotland.

Today, I rise to read all 102 of their names into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. While they are no longer walking amongst us, they will never be forgotten by the family and friends they left behind, by our community, or by this Congress, in whose record their names will be forever remembered:

Louise Abihai  
Laurie Allen  
June Anbe  
Angelica Baclig  
Narciso Baylous, Jr.  
Vanessa Baylous  
Melva "Honey Girl" Benjamin  
Luz Bernabe  
Maurice "Shadow" Buen  
Buddy Joe Carter  
Kirk Carter  
Ediomedes Pavian Castillo  
Rex Cole  
Lydia Coloma  
Salvador Coloma  
Allen John Constantino  
Leticia "Letty" Constantino  
Theresa Cook  
Juan de Leon  
Marilou Dias  
Virginia "Vergie" Dofa  
Bette Jo Dyckman  
Robert Dyckman  
Jeanne Eliason  
Po'omaika'i Estores-Losano  
Keyiro Fuentes  
Alfredo Galinato  
Douglas Gloege  
Donna Gomes  
Michael Gordon  
George Hall III  
Carole Hartley  
Claudette Heermance  
Roxanne Ibara-Hinay  
Rafael Imperial  
Lawrenzo "Buddy" Jantoc II  
Coleen Jones  
Morris Kaita  
Richard Kam  
Mark Kaminsky  
Paul Kasprzycki  
Valerie Kauffman  
Albert Kitaguchi  
Joseph Lara  
Bibiana "Bhing" Lutrania  
Rogelio Mabalot, Sr.  
Michael Mahnensmith  
Lynn Manibog  
Douglas Matsuda-Boucher  
John "Thumper" McCarthy  
Michael Misaka  
Antonia "Toni" Molina  
Michael Morinho  
Tim Nakamoto  
Todd Nakamura  
David Nuesca, Jr.

Carolyn Ono  
Matsuyuki Osato  
Pablo Pagdilao III  
Tau Ponali  
Bernard Portabes  
Gwendolyn Kanani Puou  
Junmark Quijano  
Felimon Quijano  
Sharlene Rabang  
Rebecca Rans  
Alfred "Alfie" Rawlings  
Eugene Recolizado  
Justin Recolizado  
Dale Ann Richter  
Rodolfo Rocutan  
Lee Rogo  
Conchita Sagudang  
Danilo Sagudang  
Edward Sato  
Joseph Schilling  
Anthony "Tony" Simpson  
James Smith  
Leslie Smith  
Jonathan Somaoang  
Floyd St. Clair  
Janet St. Clair  
Freeman Tam Lung  
Terri Thomas  
Carlo Tobias  
Revelina "Rebing" Tomboc  
Fa'aoso Tone  
Malui'fonua Tone  
Salote Tone  
Tony Takafua  
Franklin "Frankie" Trejos  
Nicholas "Nick" Turbin III  
Linda Vaikeli  
Angelita "Angie" Vasquez  
Adela Villegas  
Joel Villegas  
Leroy Wagner  
Clyde Wakida  
Glenda Yabes  
Todd Yamafuji  
Glenn Yoshino

The Maui Police Department also maintains the list of the two people still unaccounted for as of February 13, 2024. They are Robert H. Owens and Elmer Lee Stevens.

As we continue our work to recover and rebuild Lahaina, may the happy memories of those we lost carry our community forward and inspire us to live each day in their honor.

#### HONORING COUNCILWOMAN SONIA MENDEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Illinois). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of an extraordinary leader, Councilwoman Sonia Mendez of Seguin, Texas.

Sonia served on the city council since 2020 and served the city's residents with unwavering dedication. Her courage in the face of ALS was nothing short of inspiring. Even as the disease took its toll, she refused to slow down or let it define her.

Her commitment to District 2 and her community never wavered, showing us the true meaning of service and resilience. Sonia's legacy will live on

through the countless lives she touched and the work she did to make Seguin a better place.

Let us honor her memory by continuing to serve with the same compassion and dedication she demonstrated every day. My thoughts and prayers are with her family, friends, and all those in Seguin who feel this tremendous loss. May she rest in peace.

HONORING ARMY SPECIALIST LAURO G. DELEON, JR.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and remember Army Specialist Lauro G. DeLeon, Jr., of Floresville, Texas, who gave his life in service to our Nation 20 years ago during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lauro was just 20 years old and had a bright future ahead of him, yet he chose to serve his country with courage, knowing the risk but driven by his deep sense of duty.

In Iraq, Lauro faced fear and uncertainty, but his faith and love of his family sustained him. His mother, Grace, shared how prayer and faith in God guided him in his most dark moments. That unwavering faith is a testament to the kind of man Lauro was.

Though two decades have passed, his sacrifice is still fresh and felt. Today, we remember Lauro's bravery, his love for his family, and his commitment to his great country. May we never forget his service, and may God continue to bless his family and all those who serve.

□ 1045

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 102ND BIRTHDAY OF  
VERLON "POP" MAGUGLIN

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an incredible milestone, Mr. Verlon "Pop" Maguglin's 102nd birthday.

For over a century, Pop has been a pillar of the Live Oak community and living there for 100 years. His life is a testament to hard work, family values, and dedication to the land he loves.

Pop's farming legacy, from raising cattle to growing crops like peanuts and the famous Maguglin Slim's okra, has left a lasting mark on this county. We are also eternally grateful for his service to our Nation during World War II.

As we celebrate his 102nd birthday, we honor his dedication to family, spanning five generations, and his unwavering commitment to living life with joy and purpose. Pop's life has enriched others, and I wish him continued health and happiness.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF ROY  
RODRIGUEZ

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate City Manager Roy Rodriguez on his well-deserved retirement after more than two decades of remarkable service to the great city of McAllen.

Roy's leadership has guided McAllen, Texas, through an era of incredible growth, stability, and prosperity. Under his steady hand, the city has thrived, reaching new heights in finan-

cial strength and community development.

Roy's commitment to the people of McAllen, Texas, will leave a legacy. As he closes this chapter, I hope Roy knows he has made a profound impact on the lives of many. I wish him happiness, health, and a wonderful retirement.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF GEORGE NEE

The SPEAKER *pro tempore*. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. AMO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AMO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a dedicated champion for Rhode Island's working families, Mr. George Nee.

Last week, George publicly announced his retirement as president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO. On October 11, he will leave behind a towering legacy of over 50 years of fighting for workers.

George has often said that there can be no democracy without a vibrant union movement. That is why he has dedicated his entire career to securing economic opportunity and advancing social justice.

As George prepares to hand over the reins, I would like to honor his incredible story, rising from humble beginnings to become the face of organized labor in Rhode Island.

George Nee found his calling at Boston College in the 1960s. After meeting farmworkers from California, he was inspired to make their cause his own. He was so inspired, in fact, that he dropped out of school as a 21-year-old to advocate for the cause full time.

George's early jobs involved coordinating Boston's successful grape boycott and later a lettuce boycott in Rhode Island. Thanks to his efforts, farmworkers who spoke little to no English were able to secure better conditions and union contracts.

He slept in church parishes, on office floors, and even in an abandoned building on Brown University's campus. It wasn't glamorous work, but George got the job done.

His successful efforts introduced him to key players in the labor movement, including a soft-spoken man from Delano, Mr. Cesar Chavez. George was his driver and a bodyguard whenever he was in the area. In the mid-1970s, George joined Cesar and eight others in a pilgrimage across southern California. Their courageous campaign to organize farmworkers led to a tense standoff with growers armed with shotguns.

That is textbook George Nee: Never one to shy away from what is right and never one to back down from a fight.

After returning to Rhode Island, George helped to organize an independent union for jewelry, clerical, and healthcare workers. This organization became the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU, Local 1199. George served as its founding president from 1976 to 1983.

Madam Speaker, I have a personal connection to Local 1199. It is the same union my mom proudly joined when she worked as a nurse in Rhode Island's nursing homes.

In 1983, George was hired by our statewide AFL-CIO. From staff representative to executive director to secretary treasurer to his 15-year run as president, George has become synonymous with the union. Thanks to his leadership, Rhode Island AFL-CIO and its affiliates are now more than 80,000 strong.

Our State consistently ranks as having one of the highest rates of union membership. Despite changes in the economy and a varying degree of appeal to organized labor, though it is at its most popular right now, George has kept the faith. He has been tireless, relentless, devoted, and a champion for workers and their families.

Above all, he has never lost sight of the ultimate goal, to make sure that working people have a seat at the table whenever decisions are being made. I saw this firsthand when I worked as an adviser in the Governor's office in Rhode Island several years ago. I will never forget the quintessential image of George at the Rhode Island State House. He was roaming the halls and making the case to legislators about the need for critical protections and critical investments.

George's accomplishments are too many to name with the time that I have remaining, but suffice to say that his dedication to our State will stand the test of time.

Madam Speaker, I conclude by quoting a portion of George's retirement letter. According to George, labor is "the strongest countervailing force that stands up to the power of the business community with the goal of having a level playing field. We truly are the people's lobby."

Truly, the people's lobby is never a bad cause to be fighting for.

For decades, George Nee has been a mentor and a friend, a colleague and an advocate, and a fighter for the working people of Rhode Island. He will no doubt be missed.

On behalf of the hardworking men and women of the State of Rhode Island, I thank George.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD George Nee's resignation letter.

RIAFLCIO,  
September 3, 2024.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE BOARD AND LOCAL UNION AFFILIATES, I am writing to inform you that I will be retiring as the President of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO effective on October 11, 2024. I have been honored to serve you and our membership at the Rhode Island AFL-CIO since 1983. I was employed as a Staff Representative in 1983. In 1985, I became the Executive Director. I was elected as your Secretary-Treasurer in 1991, and I was elected as the President in 2009. I would like to give a special thank you to Ed McElroy who hired me in 1983. His faith in me will always be appreciated.

I appreciate the confidence and trust you have had in me over these many years.