

start leading the Nation in the right ways again.

TART CONNECT REACHES MILLION MILESTONE

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit micro-transit service, known as TART Connect, for providing over 1 million rides in the North Lake Tahoe-Truckee region.

Since its inception in 2021, this free, on-demand, and curb-to-curb transportation solution has revolutionized public transportation in the Tahoe area. In order to participate in the program, residents and visitors simply order a ride from a mobile app and then, from there, can travel to a number of local spots or even connect to a mainline bus system.

Originally implemented in Placer and Washoe Counties, the popularity of this service has led to its expansion throughout the north shore and town of Truckee in the years since.

Recognizing that outdoor recreation and tourism is a main driver of Tahoe's economy, TART Connect provides a remedy to the traffic challenges posed by 15 million visitors per year. Not only has this program improved traffic conditions, reducing congestion and high vehicle volume on the roadway, but it also promotes environmental health and sustainability, protecting the stunning natural beauty of the Tahoe region while meeting the demands of economic growth.

Surpassing 1 million rides is a testament to the success of TART Connect and the vital role it plays in fostering sustainable and acceptable transportation options that enhance mobility and connectivity, enriching the lives of those who visit or live in Tahoe.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives and California's Third Congressional District, I am honored to recognize TART Connect in celebration of this historic milestone.

CELEBRATING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONO BASIN NATIONAL FOREST SCENIC AREA

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area for its 40 years of protecting the remarkable ecological and cultural resources of the Mono Basin.

The basin is located immediately east of Yosemite National Park and hosts a diverse range of nature's beauty. From the famed Mono Lake at the heart of the basin to the volcanic Bodie Hills and the Mono Crater volcanoes, this area accommodates a plethora of thriving plant and animal species, some of which cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Countless advocates devoted their efforts to the preservation of this unique diversity in the Mono Basin, which led to Congress' invention of the National Scenic Area in 1984. Mono Basin is proud to be the first in United States history of these National Scenic Areas dedicated by Congress, and it has continued to be a staple of rich history and wildlife.

Over the past four decades, the Mono Basin Scenic Area has committed itself to supporting natural resource protection and education, which can be found in its initiatives at the scenic area visitor center. Focusing on both the natural and human history of the Mono Basin, there are interactive activities, films, and galleries for patrons to explore.

The Mono Basin and its established centers and areas set a high standard for excellence in the preservation of ecological resources.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to join the United States Forest Service, Inyo National Forest, as well as Tribal, local, and State partners in celebrating the 40-year anniversary of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, and I applaud their ongoing efforts to maintain the natural beauty and history of the Mono Basin.

□ 1130

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROCKLIN BOY SCOUT TROOP 29

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to mark and celebrate the 100-year anniversary of Boy Scout Troop 29, located in Rocklin, California.

Troop 29 was first chartered in 1924 in the historic Mother Lode region of Alta, Dutch Flat, and Gold Run. Reconstituting itself in 1949 and 1950, Troop 29 made its resurgence as an active force in Rocklin, and the Rocklin Lions Club became their official sponsor.

Since this debut, it has served as a youth-led troop that boasts approximately 60 Scouts at a time, who are focused on learning essential skills through an immersive merit badge system. This program bolsters the Scout values of leadership, citizenship, and responsibility, and works to build character in the next generation of leaders. They engage in a multitude of diverse fields, enriching our communities one project at a time.

Throughout the years, the Scouts of Troop 29, both alumni and current, have provided countless hours of volunteer service and leadership development in our communities. I applaud Troop 29 for their ongoing presence in Rocklin and their 10 decades of commitment to doing good and helping others.

It is because of organizations like Rocklin Boy Scout Troop 29 and the youth who participate that those around them are given a great sense of hope for the future. Their determination, resilience, and commitment to excellence of character is inspiring.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Rocklin Boy Scout Troop 29 for reaching this significant milestone, their centennial celebration.

CELEBRATING CAPTAIN ANNALISA SANFILIPPO

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a moment to celebrate and congratulate Captain Annalisa Sanfilippo on becoming the first female fighter pilot assigned to the 144th Fighter

Wing in the California Air National Guard.

Annalisa is a graduate of Vista del Lago High School in Folsom, California, and attended the University of Oklahoma in 2020 to earn her bachelor's degree in meteorology. It was here during college that she had the opportunity to shadow Air Force officers in ROTC and ultimately set her sights on flying.

After graduating college, she worked as an air quality specialist in the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District in Fresno, where she focused on forensic meteorology, determining sources of air pollution.

She just recently completed the F-15C fighter pilot training at Kingsley Field Air National Guard Base in Oregon and uses her degree in meteorology as an asset in her role as a pilot.

Annalisa will now go on to protect the constituents of California's Third Congressional District and the State of California with the 144th Fighter Wing, which provides air defense for the Western United States. The mission of the Wing is air dominance, a sentiment that Annalisa plans to fulfill and exceed in her position.

Her courage and commitment to her community and commitment to giving back to the place that she calls home is truly inspirational.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Captain Annalisa Sanfilippo for her historic accomplishment, as well as for her heroic and invaluable service to our State and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING ANDRES AND MARIA, THE CÁRDENAS FAMILY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, as we near the start of Hispanic Heritage Month 2024, I rise today in honor of my family, who arrived in the United States over 70 years ago.

I rise to speak of the Cárdenas family's journey and accomplishments and our impact on the diaspora of the Latino experience and history of the United States.

The presence of Latinos in the Americas is vast and has shaped the continent we know today for centuries. Even before colonists arrived, our ancestors, the Mayans, the Incas, the Olmecs, and the Aztecs, had already built great empires and civilizations that provided immense contributions to the world.

Today, we have come to define and represent the diverse Latino communities, with over 65 million spread across the country, and represent nearly 20 percent of the overall U.S. population. It is fitting to document our

history and generational stories and preserve them in our CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Much of our history is recounted through the stories of our parents, our aunts, our uncles, and our “grandmothers,” “abuelitas,” and “grandfathers,” “abuelitos.”

These stories passed on from one generation to another often allow us the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and the difficult decisions of those who came before us.

We stand on their shoulders, benefiting from the hard work, tough decisions, and unwavering determination that paved the way for us. Today, new generations are initiating their own American-Latino stories and are embedding them in our country's history.

Today's Latino stories are being written by the new immigrants coming to this country, having overcome obstacles and incredible journeys.

As a proud son of Mexican immigrants, I know firsthand that when immigrants come to this country they work hard and contribute in countless ways to our great Nation.

Today, I stand before my colleagues to share the story of my family, the story of Andres and Maria Cárdenas, who were both raised and married in Temastian, Jalisco, Mexico. They came to this country, settled in California, and raised 11 American-born citizens. Their journey is a prime example of what people can achieve when given the opportunity to succeed.

My family reflects the United States of America's story. What my parents were able to accomplish is typical of many immigrant families. What my siblings and I were able to accomplish is confirmation and proof of what immigrants in this country have to offer to everyone and the benefits that are profound to everyone in our country.

With the long history of racism toward Latinos and xenophobia toward immigrants, the story of my family is a story that needs to be told.

Mr. Speaker, my family's story in the United States of America began in the 1920s, when my maternal grandfather, Ciriaco Pablo Gonzalez Quezada—yes, that is one person—migrated from Mexico to work for the railroad company in New Mexico. During his initial stay, Ciriaco lived in freight cars and moved anywhere work was available.

Like many immigrants, my grandfather just wanted the opportunity to work, provide for his family, and be a responsible, contributing member of the community.

In 1924, my grandmother, Clara Miramontes Quezada and her baby, Marcelo, came to California to join my grandfather, Ciriaco, who was working as an agricultural and construction worker at that time.

My mother, Maria Encarnacion “Chonita” Quezada, was born on March 25, 1928, in Avalon, Catalina Island, California. My mother was the third oldest child of Ciriaco and Clara, and she was one of nine siblings.

An American citizen by birthright, she spent the first 3 years of her life on the quaint island, as my grandfather, Ciriaco, who had earned a reputation of being a hard worker, was employed for 3 years by the famous industrialist and chewing gum magnate, William Wrigley Jr., to work in the construction of Catalina Island's now iconic casino.

However, good fortunes turned, and my family experienced one of the darkest times in our country's history. As our country faced the hardships of the Great Depression, hostility turned against Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, who were blamed for the lack of employment opportunities and were given an ultimatum to leave the country voluntarily or endure a forceful deportation.

Between 1929 and 1939, the U.S. Government launched the Mexican Repatriation Program, the largest deportation effort of any people in our country's history, where an estimated 2 million people were forced out, of which 40 to 60 percent of whom were United States citizens. A majority were children.

Among them were my mother, Maria Encarnacion, and her sister, my aunt, Natalia, who were born here in the United States.

However, in 1931, my grandfather took into consideration the changing turn of events and decided, rather than put his wife and children through that humiliating and life-threatening ordeal, he chose to return to Mexico.

My father, Andres Soria, the son of Anastacio Cárdenas and Natalia Soria, was born on April 18, 1925, in Temastian, Jalisco, Mexico. Andres Cárdenas was the oldest of seven brothers and sisters.

Both my parents had a humble early life in Temastian. Not having access to resources like traditional schooling, they both loosely received the equivalent of a third-grade education, yet their personal values and education would be shaped by humble beliefs in their mutual Catholic faith.

My father developed his strong work ethic by working in his early years as a farmworker in the fields of Jalisco and Nayarit, Mexico. No matter how punishing or difficult the work was, he always did things without complaint.

My parents eventually met and fell in love in the little town of Temastian, Jalisco. On July 1, 1946, Andres and Maria Cárdenas got married at El Santuario del Señor de los Rayos Catholic Church. It was a marriage that was blessed with 11 children and would last 47 years until our father passed away.

Their time in Mexico as a newlywed couple would be brief. During and after World War II, the U.S. Government sought agriculture and railroad workers from Mexico to address their labor shortages and reversed their previous racist and xenophobic Depression-era deportation and repatriation policies.

This change in policy moved my grandfather, Ciriaco, to make his re-

turn to the United States in 1947 under their Bracero Program, and that is when my parents, Andres and Maria, chose to come to the United States to start a new life.

From 1942 to 1964, the Bracero Program issued temporary U.S. work permits to nearly 4 million Mexican workers. The program allowed the country to capitalize on cheap labor and benefit from the blood, sweat, and tears of families like mine.

Once in the United States, Andres and Maria Cárdenas settled in California's Central Valley, living in a farmhouse near Stockton, to work as farmworkers. It was a new beginning for Andres and Maria, one where they would see their family grow and be exposed to new and greater opportunities.

Within the years they lived in camp number 12 on McDonald Island, Andres and Maria Cárdenas would welcome the first 3 of their 11 children. Catalina “Katy” Cárdenas, the first child and daughter, was born on February 10, 1948. A year later, on February 19, 1949, they welcomed their second child, Elvira “Vera” Cárdenas. On April 1, 1950, they welcomed their third child and first son, Ricardo “Richard” Cárdenas, to the family.

For several years, my father worked in the fields, picking just about everything under the Sun, lemons, oranges, grapes, asparagus, and potatoes.

After working in the fields for various growing seasons, he moved his family further west to Antioch, California, to work as a railroad worker. The move to Antioch welcomed the addition of two more children.

Their fourth child, Eliza “Licha” Cárdenas, was born on November 19, 1951, and 2 years after, their fifth child was born on May 8, 1953, Maria Trinidad “Trini” Cárdenas.

My father, Andres, was always determined to work hard. When the opportunities presented themselves, he would always step up.

I recall the story he told me of the time he was promoted from a farmworker in the fields to operating the farm's tractor. When the English-speaking owner of the farm asked a group of Mexican and Filipino laborers if they knew how to operate the tractor, no one understood what he was saying.

My father took a risk and raised his hand. When the owner took him to the tractor and handed him the keys, my father waited for the man to leave to figure out how to turn the tractor on, and he began to teach himself how to operate that tractor.

□ 1145

My mother and father were humble people. They didn't brag about their life or their accomplishments. They chose not to indulge in vain conversations. There were times we learned some of their personal stories and accomplishments through the accounts of others.

One of the stories my siblings and I came to learn over 40 years after it occurred was about a time a fire broke

out while my father was working in the fields. A family friend, Victor Cervantes, the son of a farmworker by the name of Pedro Cervantes, shared the story that his father told him.

Pedro was burning the field in order to remove the crop residues of the previous harvest and things quickly got out of control. The water pump that connected to the levee for the purpose of controlling the burn suddenly stopped working and the fire quickly spread and surrounded him. Realizing his dire predicament, Pedro laid down and began to say his last prayer. At that moment, my father, Andres, drove the tractor through the flames and pulled Pedro out of the fire and saved his life.

My father and my mother never shared that story with any of their children. He was a hero. He saved a man's life that day, yet the story was unknown to us for over 40 years.

It was several years after my father's passing that our close family friend, Victor, shared the accounts of that day with my older sister, Nani, and she shared the story with me. Since my father had already passed away, I went to see my mother the next day to confirm the story. I asked my mother: Is it true that my dad saved a man's life when he was working in the fields many, many years ago? And without any emotion, she replied: "Si," which means "yes." Astonished by her response, I asked why they never shared the story with any of us, and she replied, "Hijo, nomas estaba haciendo su quehacer," which translates to, "Son, he was just doing his job."

Andres Cárdenas was not a firefighter. He was a farmworker working in the fields that day, and when he heard a cry for help, he responded and saved a man's life. My parents were humble and always believed that actions speak louder than words.

In early 1953, my parents decided to leave California's Central Valley, and they moved to the suburbs of Los Angeles. For a short time, they lived in San Gabriel, California, in a community that included relatives and friends who had emigrated to the United States from Temastian, Jalisco, and their neighboring towns.

The change of scenery from the clear skies of the Central Valley to the smog-filled skies of Los Angeles was a drastic change. As my parents and siblings adjusted to the move, San Gabriel's poor air quality became detrimental to my mother's health. She developed a serious respiratory issue that needed medical attention.

The access to quality and affordable healthcare has always been a barrier for immigrant families and communities throughout America. It was back then, and it is today. The high cost of care and medications often made immigrant families decide to avoid visiting the doctor, even if they find themselves in dire situations. This was certainly the case for the Cárdenas family and our household back then.

As my mother dealt with her medical condition, she began to worry for the health and well-being of her children. My father and mother decided what was best for their family was to move away from the bustling city and move to the suburbs in the San Fernando Valley.

Due to the redlining policies that existed at that time, Andres and Maria Cárdenas were only allowed to buy a home in Pacoima, California. Pacoima was deemed a redline community due to the mostly low-income White, Black, and Brown people who lived there. Yet, the redline stigma was never a concern for any of its residents, as it became a very welcoming community and a wonderful place to raise your children.

On November 17, 1955, my father, who at that time was working for the Laborers Local 300 Union, was able to purchase our family home on Filmore Street in Pacoima. This home, which to this day remains in the family, would see the Cárdenas family double in size with the birth of the next six Cárdenas children.

On April 3, 1955, my parents welcomed their sixth child, Andres "Papi" Cárdenas, Jr., to the family. Their seventh child, Maria "Nani" Cárdenas was born on February 2, 1957. The eighth child, Jose Cárdenas, was born on August 27, 1958. The last three of the children were all born in the 1960s. Maria del Rosario "Challo" Cárdenas was born on October 7, 1960, Ernesto "Ernie" Cárdenas was born on November 8, 1961, and I, ANTONIO "TONY" CÁRDENAS was the last of their 11 children to be born on March 31, 1963.

In Pacoima, our family's social and community involvement revolved around the Catholic church. My parents were devoted Catholics who always looked to be involved parishioners. My mother's devotion led her to dedicate herself to service of "Adoracion Nocturna," the Nocturnal Adoration Society and "Las Guadalupanas" Society, both part of the Santa Rosa Parish in the city of San Fernando. She also extended her service to "Las Guadalupanas" and "La Legion de Maria" of the Mary Immaculate Catholic Church of Pacoima.

Like many immigrant families, we were guided by our religious principles. We attended Sunday mass and participated in church events. My parents instilled in us the Golden Rule: In everything you do, do to others what you would have them do to you. They weren't just words. They led by example.

My father, Andres, took his responsibility as the breadwinner very seriously. His deep love for his family meant that he ensured there was always food on the table. His work ethic meant he would work 5, 6, or 7 days a week with an attitude of gratitude, appreciation, and without complaint.

For approximately 15 years, my father, Andres, worked as a construction laborer throughout Los Angeles. His

construction career led him to help build the foundation of the San Fernando Valley we know today. He was very proud of building the roads, highways, schools, and universities, the infrastructure that stands in the Valley to this day.

In the late 1960s, after years of working in construction, my father was able to begin his gardening business and, for the first time, his professional career took him to be his own boss.

He started with a few neighborhood clients and little by little began to expand his business across the valley.

During the San Fernando Valley's hot summer days, where we endured 100-degree weather, my father chose never to take a day off. As he sought to teach us strong work ethic, he would take all of his sons to work with him. We didn't appreciate it at the time, but his hard work ethic led all of us to be successful in all of our respective careers.

Maria Cárdenas was a homemaker. She raised and took care of her 11 children and in addition to the care, she provided us her love and extended that love to other neighborhood kids that she was entrusted to care for. My mother, Maria, gave the kids the loving care that every child deserves. In this picture, you might see that little girl at the bottom with the white ribbon in her hair. She looks a little different than the rest of us. That is Angel.

Angel was entrusted to our family and far too often, when her mother was supposed to pick her up, she wasn't there. She stayed overnight. She was with us. She became part of the family. That is the love that a mother with 11 children finds the ability to afford that to children who deserve that, too.

My mother was also a talented seamstress who was hired by fellow parishioners to sew dresses for their child's quinceaneras, communions, and their weddings.

I recall she had a natural skill of producing beautiful dresses just by listening to the requests from her customers or by following the rough sketches that they provided. I got to witness the faces of satisfaction once they received my mom's creations, sometimes bringing the bride to tears.

Beyond formal education, my parents taught us through their actions, giving us the most valuable lessons of all. In the Mexican culture, the most important education doesn't come from a degree, but from the instruction at home. It is where my parents instilled in us the values of compassion, love, respect for others, trustworthiness, and the importance of pouring your heart and soul into everything that you do.

All of Andres and Maria's 11 children attended Telfair Elementary, San Fernando Middle School, and San Fernando High School. Andres and Maria were proud to know that their children were able to achieve a formal education far beyond what they were able to achieve growing up in Mexico.

We grew up in a neighborhood with its share of challenges, but none of the Cárdenas children ever ended up in the back seat of a police car. We followed our parents' examples, took the advice of caring teachers and mentors, and always gave our best in everything that we did.

The next generation of the Cárdenas family have been blessed with opportunities and accomplishments that far exceeded the dreams of our parents, Andres and Maria Cárdenas.

The first child of Andres and Maria Cárdenas, Catalina "Katy" Cárdenas Gomez married Freddie Gomez, a Vietnam veteran and a former employee at Lockheed. My sister and Freddie are blessed with four children: Rosamaria Gomez, Freddie Gomez, III, Cristina Gomez, and their youngest child, Mike A. Gomez.

The Gomez family have welcomed Francisco Garcia through his marriage with their daughter, Cristina, and will soon welcome Maribel Medina to the family when she marries their son, Mike.

Today, Katy is enjoying her retirement after a long career at Kaiser Permanente. Katy and Freddie are celebrating 54 years of marriage. They love spending time with their eight grandchildren: Anthony, Gabriel, Landon, Braydon, Aaron, Mila, Ariana, and Ariel, as they attend all of their sporting and family events.

My sister, Elvira "Vera" Cárdenas Loa, the second child of Andres and Maria, married Richard Loa, an attorney with a longstanding career since 1977. Richard is an elected councilmember of the city of Palmdale, California. Richard and Vera have four children: Angelica Loa-Perez, Jesse Loa, Richard "Ricky" Loa, and Becky Loa. They also have welcomed Henry Perez to their family as he married their daughter, Angelica.

Today, both Vera and her husband, Richard, are celebrating 51 years of marriage and enjoy having the company of their five grandchildren: Elias, Natalia, Amaya, Maddox, and Jaxson.

The third child of Andres and Maria Cárdenas, Ricardo "Richard" Cárdenas, received his engineering degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, UCLA, and retired after a long career at the NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Richard married Margaret and they have two children: Richard Andres Cárdenas and Kimberly Sara Cárdenas Munch. Richard Andres married Yvette Santana Cárdenas and Kimberly married David Munch.

Today, my brother, Richard, and Margaret are celebrating 48 years of marriage and are spending quality time with their four grandchildren: Diego, Vincent, Hudson, and Turner.

The fourth child, Elisa "Licha" Cárdenas Herrera, married Hector Herrera, a Vietnam veteran, and they have four children: Hector Herrera, Jr., Monica Herrera Sanchez, Elisa Maria Herrera Lomeli, and David Herrera.

Licha and Hector have welcomed two sons-in-law to their family, Rogi Sanchez, who is married to their daughter, Monica; and Richard Lomeli, who is married to their daughter, Elisa.

Today, Licha and Hector are celebrating 53 years of marriage and are enjoying the company of their six grandchildren: Kilie, Olivia, Lennon, Sienna, Lana, and Faora; and their great-grandchild, Atreus.

□ 1200

Maria Trinidad "Trini" Cárdenas Rodriguez, the fifth child, graduated from California State University, Northridge, with a bilingual K-12 teaching degree.

She married Luis J. Rodriguez, who is a writer, journalist, poet, and activist. They have four children, Ramiro Daniel Rodriguez, Andrea Victoria Rodriguez, Ruben Joaquin Rodriguez, and Luis Jacinto "Chito" Rodriguez. Their daughter, Andrea, is married to Sean Patrick Kenney.

Today, Trini and her husband, Luis, now spend much of their time with their five grandchildren, Ricardo, Ana, Amanda, Jack, and Catalina, and their seven great-grandchildren, Jayda, Liliana, Xavier, Andre, Jedidiah, Rose, and Niklaus.

My brother, the sixth child of Andres and Maria, Andres "Papi" Cárdenas, Jr., succeeded academically.

His teachers and counselors saw immense promise in Papi, so much so that the San Fernando High School nominated him to be a delegate to The American Legion California Boys State program. California Boys State celebrated and sought students who embodied the spirit of their schools and communities, and it was fitting that they chose Papi, a young man of great character who always looked to be of service to others.

Sadly, on July 4, 1971, during a family trip to Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico, Papi rescued someone from drowning and lost his life in the process. He died a hero, and he has been immortalized in the hearts of his family and friends.

Maria "Nani" Cárdenas, the seventh child of Andres and Maria, married Enrique Sanchez, and they had five children, Luzmaria Sanchez, Esperanza Sanchez, Enrique Sanchez, Jr., Cristal Sanchez, and Jose Andres Sanchez.

Today, Nani enjoys spending time with her three grandchildren, Gabriela, Sebastian, and Andres Mateo.

The eighth child of Andres and Maria, Dr. Jose Cárdenas, is a graduate of Baylor University and today works as a clinical community psychologist in the community that he grew up in. Jose is married to Rosalinda Rivera Cárdenas, a longtime educator, and they have three children, Benjamin Elias Cárdenas, Nicolas Antonio Cárdenas, and Cristian Rene Cárdenas.

Jose's family has grown with the addition of two daughters-in-laws, Lucerito Estela Cárdenas, who is married to Benjamin, and Nicole Elizabeth

Cárdenas, who is married to Nicolas. They will soon welcome Elizabeth Maria De Los Angeles Sanchez to the family as she is engaged to marry Cristian Rene.

Today, Jose and Rosalinda are celebrating 38 years of marriage and are enjoying the company of their two grandchildren, Nora and Nash.

My sister Maria del Rosario Cárdenas Cline, "Challo," is the ninth child and the last daughter of Andres and Maria. Challo completed UCLA's bilingual dental assistant grant program and for over 30 years worked in the dentistry field.

Challo is married to Richard Cline, a retired engineer, and they have spent 22 years together raising their five children, Selina Reyes Joll, Monique Reyes, Derek Cline, Lucas Cline, and Rebecca Cline.

Over the years, Challo and her husband, Richard, have welcomed new members to the Cárdenas-Cline family, with Selina's marriage to Jason Joll and Lucas' marriage to Amanda Cline.

The 10th child of Andres and Maria, my brother Ernesto "Ernie" Cárdenas, has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara, UCSB, and a master's degree in business administration from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Ernie married Isabel Calderon, and they have three children, Armando Gabriel Cárdenas, Daniel Esteban Cárdenas, and Marcos Adrian Cárdenas. Ernie and Isabel have also welcomed to the family Alex, who is married to their son Marcos.

Today, Ernie and Isabel are celebrating 33 years of marriage together, and he is enjoying retirement after a long career working for Pacific Bell, SBC, and AT&T.

As the last child born to Andres and Maria Cárdenas, I benefited from witnessing my siblings' life experiences and examples as it helped shape some of my academic and professional pursuits.

I am the last of 11 children to attend and graduate from San Fernando High School. I was accepted to the University of California Santa Barbara, UCSB, where I earned my degree in electrical engineering.

In 1992, I made my best decision and married the love of my life, Norma. We have been married for 32 years, and I have enjoyed her love, patience, counsel, and her full support.

We have raised our four incredible children, Vanessa Marie De La Rosa, Cristian David Cárdenas, Andres Antonio Cárdenas, and Alina Brianna Cárdenas.

Through my daughter Vanessa's marriage, we have welcomed our son-in-law, Brian De La Rosa, to the family and have been blessed with two amazing grandchildren, Joaquin Cruz and Jimena Luna.

For nearly 29 years of public service, I was honored to have the trust of the incredible people of the Northeast San Fernando Valley.

In 1996, I ran for the California State Assembly and became the first Latino to represent the San Fernando Valley in our State's capitol. I was elected to the State assembly for three terms.

In 2003, I won a seat on the Los Angeles City Council to represent the Sixth District. I proudly represented San Fernando Valley residents for nearly a decade in city hall.

In 2012, with the support of Norma and the rest of my family, I decided to run for the United States Congress. I have the distinction of being the first Latino to represent the San Fernando Valley in the United States House of Representatives.

After 12 years serving in Congress, I decided to retire from my position to focus more time on my family and allow the next generation of leaders the opportunity I was granted.

I would like to take a point of privilege and acknowledge the United States Senator from California who is here in the Chambers with us who also grew up in Pacoima and who is also the son of immigrant parents from Mexico. That is what I mean when it is time for me to move on and leave the opportunity for great leadership to flourish and continue to represent us.

I thank United States Senator ALEX PADILLA for all the commitment he has given, not only to the community of the northeast valley but to the State of California and to our country. Again, in the spirit of the Hispanic Heritage Month, I thank him.

Today, I think of my parents and their journey, of their love and instruction, and I wish they could have seen all of our accomplishments. I hope that by telling their story today, they are proud of us all.

Andres Cárdenas Soria passed away at his home in Pacoima, California, on July 3, 1993. He was surrounded by his family and the friends who respected and loved him dearly.

Six years after our father's passing, on October 26, 1999, Maria Encarnacion "Chonita" Quezada Cárdenas passed away while she was spending time with family and friends in her hometown of Temastian, Mexico.

Andres and Maria Cárdenas were survived by their 10 children, 38 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren.

In 1997, my siblings and I decided to honor our father's legacy and formed the Andres Cárdenas Family Foundation. Two years later, after our mother passed away, we decided to change the foundation to the Andres y Maria Cárdenas Family Foundation.

As Andres and Maria had encouraged their children to seek higher education opportunities and saw their children earn degrees, we decided to give back to deserving students and families of the Northeast San Fernando Valley by providing scholarships and support for their higher education pursuits.

Now, for over 25 years, the Andres y Maria Cárdenas Family Foundation has supported the educational goals of

local students by raising and giving away over \$1.5 million in scholarship funds in support of over 1,400 valley students.

On March 9, 2009, the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks renamed the Blythe Street Park in Panorama City, California, to the Andres and Maria Cárdenas Recreation Center. The local not-for-profit organizations requested the name be changed as they felt my parents' story was representative of the local neighborhood and of its values of hard work and community commitment and how immigrants can make it in America.

Three years later, on March 19, 2012, the Valley Region No. 9 Elementary School, which was brand new, located in Van Nuys, California, was named the Andreas and Maria Cárdenas Elementary School. The local community wanted the school to bear the name of immigrant parents, who, despite facing enormous challenges, were able to promote education in their households and produce successful, contributing members of our great Nation.

The story of Andres and Maria Cárdenas is just a small part of the enormous legacy of immigrants. Like many immigrant families, my parents dedicated their life's work, "para sacar su familia adelante," which means "to help their family advance in life."

The story of Andres and Maria Cárdenas is America's story, one of hard work and achievements in the pursuit of the American Dream. Their journey from Mexico to the United States and their ability to raise their 11 successful children in the face of many challenges is a testament to the strength and resilience of many Latino and immigrant families across our great country.

Andres and Maria Cárdenas embody the values that make our country great, and their legacy lives on through their descendants and the contributions they continue to make to our society.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORAN). The gentleman from California has 22 minutes remaining.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. The Andres and Maria Cárdenas Family Foundation was created and built in the spirit of community. Like many families across this great Nation, it is easy to take things for granted, to assume that this is the way it should be, that things become easy.

The reality is for far too many families in every community across America, hardworking parents, sometimes working two or three jobs, when their child says, Mom, Dad, I got accepted to Brown University, first of all, their parents are, like, *que es Brown?* What does that mean?

Far too often, many immigrant families see that there is a college right down the street, maybe a community college, and they say, *mijo, mija*, why

don't you just go to school there, not realizing that their child is actually living their dream come true, to go to one of the most prestigious universities in the world.

It takes organizations like the Andres y Maria Cárdenas Family Foundation to bring those parents in and to congratulate them and say, your daughter is going to Berkeley, your son is going to MIT, and to let them know how proud they should be, and they are proud, and to help them understand how important it is that they support them.

Many parents, especially immigrant parents, struggle with the idea of letting their little *mija*, their little daughter, go thousands of miles away to go to school when there is a campus right down the street.

These are the kind of cultural nuances, the kind of things that some Americans don't understand, but the Andres y Maria Cárdenas Family Foundation, built by the Cárdenas family and the community, understands that and, along with that, giving those young people the resources and the dollars that they earned and deserve that their parents, on many occasions, cannot afford to give them to be able to achieve their dreams, the dreams of many families who come to this country when those dreams were denied to them in their home country.

□ 1215

Another organization that my sister, Trini, and her husband, Luis, started, a not-for-profit, just like the Andres and Maria Cárdenas Foundation, is Tia Chuchas, which happens to be—now that bookstores have been disappearing from communities across the Nation—the only bookstore in the northeast valley.

It is free for anybody to come and enjoy the scene or come on open mike night and express themselves and to feel at home and to buy books. In some cases, if they can't afford it, they receive books for free to increase their knowledge and to dream, to grow, and to know that in a community like the northeast valley there is always a home for you. No matter how much money you make or don't make, there is always a place where you can go where you are loved and you are respected and you are allowed to be whoever you are and dream about being whatever you want to be.

This is a not-for-profit that has been going on for decades and a not-for-profit that will continue for many, many years to come, born out of the heart and the minds of Trini Cárdenas, my sister, and my brother-in-law, Luis Rodriguez.

Another not-for-profit started by one of my family members is Luminarias by Jose Cárdenas and his wife, Rosalinda. Rosalinda was a lifelong educator. Jose Cárdenas, when he graduated from college with his doctor of psychology degree, came right back home to the community to be one of

the few bilingual psychologists to serve a community of hundreds of thousands of people. He did it purposefully because he didn't want to be anywhere else but in the community that gave him so much.

Today, their not-for-profit serves parents and children, students in the northeast valley in Spanish and English and allows them to get true, real healthcare and mental health care access, something that too many people in America just don't have access to.

Mental health is something that is a stigma in many communities, and it is a stigma in our community, the Hispanic community. It is wonderful to see that people are willing to dedicate themselves and to give of themselves to break those barriers and to make life better for others and literally to save lives.

When you are a psychologist like my brother or a teacher like my sister-in-law, Rosalinda, you know that the suicide rate for children is far too high in this country. They need not only psychological support, but they need to know that they are loved and appreciated and that they matter.

I also want to talk about some things that occurred, and unfortunately still occur to a certain degree to this day, and that is that women are not encouraged to pursue their dreams as much as men are in this country.

I am the youngest of 11, born in 1963. My eldest sister was born in 1948. That means when Catalina and Elvira, Licha, and Trini were going to school, that was in the 1960s. When they met with their counselor and asked what classes I should take, the counselor would say you should take typing and home economics to learn how to cook because you should just think of getting married, and he will take care of you.

I don't think that is very good advice, and my wife, Norma, doesn't think that is very good advice, either. However, that is the advice that too many women in America received back then, and to this day too many women receive that advice, as well.

My sister, Licha, used to help me with my math homework. She was better at math than me, but yet I became the engineer because society kept reminding her that it was not necessary to go to college. She could have; she should have. She is smarter than me, and in some ways a better person.

I tell you that, Mr. Speaker, because it is important for people to understand that sometimes struggles are manmade. A counselor who should be advising a child and encouraging them to live their dreams tries to discourage them. That is a shame. That is unfortunate. That is not good.

When I got to San Fernando High School, I found out later that this kind of situation happened not only to my brothers and sisters but thousands and thousands of kids who grew up in our neighborhood who went to our high

school and the neighboring high schools.

When I got to my high school, my counselor asked me what I wanted to be when I grow up, and I said I wanted to be an engineer.

She said, I am going to put you in wood shop, auto shop, and metal shop—we had that back in the day—so that, you know what, you could make a fine mechanic. I am sure you are good with your hands.

I had to argue with my counselor to take the classes that I needed to even be able to be admitted to college because in order for you to be able to be admitted to a university in America, you have to take certain high school courses. If you don't, you are not allowed to even be accepted.

Why did I know that? I was lucky; I was the youngest of 11. I saw my brother, Richard, become an engineer; my sister, Nani, go to CSUN; my sister, Trini, go to CSUN. All this activity that I happened to know helped me better than that counselor to know what I needed to do. Luckily for me, I won that argument. I took the courses I needed to take.

Then something even worse happened. In my 12th grade year at San Fernando High School, I was accepted to the University of California, Santa Barbara electrical engineering department. Somebody told me later it was the third toughest engineering school to get into in the country. I made it. I earned it.

When I told my 12th grade math teacher the next day after receiving that letter at my home, he didn't let me finish my sentence when I said I got accepted to UC Santa Barbara, and I am going to be an engineer. He cut me off and said don't even try it. You can't cut it. They will eat you alive.

I tell that story to young children all the time, and I remind them, how dare any of your teachers or counselors or anybody in your community tell you that you can't be this or you can't be that. I ask them: How many of you think I am a straight-A student? Being that I am a Congressman, most of the kids raise their hands. I am flattered.

I was never a straight-A student, but I always tried my best. I always gave everything my all, and that is what I tell the children: Do not believe the lies, the lies that were told to many of the people in this photo, who despite those lies achieved their dreams.

I get to be a United States Congressman. Mr. Speaker, as you and I know, the honor to be a Member of this Chamber is overwhelming. It is a tremendous responsibility. The reason I get to speak to you this way today is because you have to be a Member of Congress to be acknowledged and recognized to speak on this floor.

Yes, you have seen the President speak, and that is because he is invited, and we allow him that honor. You have seen heads of state do the same. The only way that they can do that is they have to be invited by this body and be allowed to do so.

My community elected me to be their Representative, a kid from Pacoima, someone who was told you can't make it. You can't do it. I was someone who had just enough of the right people in my life. Mr. Johnson, my 10th grade English teacher, who stayed after school to make sure that I finally learned how to read and write so that I could some day go to college.

I found out later in life, in one grade level, Mr. Johnson got me to read two-and-a-half grade levels higher by the time I left his class from the time I arrived in his class. That is love. That is a professional. That is an American who pours his heart and soul into what he does. Lucky for us, we have had just enough people in our lives to help us do that.

Hispanic Heritage Month is something that is celebrated in the United States of America, and we have many months to celebrate many communities because we are a country that is great, with a tapestry of people who have been here for hundreds of years and some people who just arrived yesterday.

A country that is great is a country that appreciates all of its citizens, all of its residents, all of the people who give of themselves and work hard and just dream for a better life for the next generation. That is the United States of America that I am proud to be a part of. That is the United States of America, Mr. Speaker, that I have had the honor and privilege to enjoy.

I stand on the shoulders of many, and I am so proud to stand on the shoulders of the men and women right here beside me—humble people who always give it their all. Humble people who do things without complaint. Beautiful people who are American citizens, who are making this country wonderful, beautiful, and great in every little act that they have ever done.

I also want to say that it is not lost on me that I have heard my brothers and sisters talk about how in their jobs they are always asked to be promoted. Sometimes they say yes. Sometimes they say no, thank you. Why is that? Because they give it their all. They put their heart and soul into what they do.

To me, that is all Andres and Maria dreamed of, to have children who understand what it is to respect ourselves, to respect others, to work hard, to play by the rules, and to never think twice about giving, giving, giving.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few names of some great Latinos and Latinas who have influenced me, my family members: Cárdenas, Sanchez, Loa, Martinez, Padilla, Rivas, Rodriguez, Guzman, Gutierrez, Zaragoza, Gavidia, Franco, Herrera, Gomez, Rivera, Reyes, Pacheco, Montes, Ramos, Quezada, Pinedo, Perez, Menendez, Acevedo, Delgado, Schneider, Espallat, Garcia,

Barragan, Casar, Torres, Polanco, Escutia, Jimenez, Vargas, Napolitano, Vela, and the list goes on and on and on.

I have been blessed, and I hope and pray that whatever I have done or whatever I do, I can be some kind of a positive example and help bring blessings to others. It is an honor to stand before you today and to share their story, our story, an American story and to celebrate the rich heritage and contributions of Latinos and Latinas throughout the history of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1230

MAJOR ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Well, it has been about 6 weeks now since Congress last met, and I think it is time to review some of the major issues of the day that I do not feel the mainstream press is doing an adequate job of covering.

We continue to have people stream across our southern border. The Biden administration has made some changes after 3½ years mildly reducing the amount. Nevertheless, in the most recent month available, we still have an estimated 145,000 people crossing the southern border per month.

It is not difficult to go back to the prior administration and find monthly numbers 4 years ago of about 8,000 people a month. You can say that is due to COVID, but if you go back even before COVID, you would have monthly figures of about 11,000 people crossing the southern border, so we go from 11,000 to 145,000. That is despite the fact that we are pausing, waiting for another 30,000 a month to cross as they redo their parole program, so we will have an extra 30,000 from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In addition to that, we have another 6,000 to 7,000 a month in another program coming across from Afghanistan.

Why do we not talk more about this, the scope of the problem that we have—even after the reduction—10 or 12 times as many people crossing the southern border compared to the last administration? And that is just the numbers coming here.

In addition to that, we have the human tragedy of people coming here, the people drowning in the Rio Grande which they don't report, the people drowning in the Pacific Ocean, which they don't report, the people dehydrating in the Arizona desert, which they don't report.

The last time I was down there I asked one more time the woman who was in charge of vetting, or meeting the new people crossing the southern border, and she admitted a high number of women were being sexually as-

saulted as they came north, north through the lands that are controlled by the Mexican drug cartels.

Where is the party that purports to be the party of women as these women are being sexually molested?

These are issues that should be covered daily in the newspapers in this country, but the scope of the problem is not covered. There is no reason why this 140,000 a month, 150,000 a month should not be reduced down to 10 or 11,000 a month as it was 4 years ago.

I would like to see a little bit more coverage about that in the newspapers.

The next thing that should be talked about is while we were out, Mark Zuckerberg talked about the degree to which he was leaned on to restrict speech in his business.

Freedom of speech is something a lot of us have taken for granted, although I am a little bit afraid that the average American is beginning to waver on their commitment to free speech. Nevertheless, it is something that should be brought up as we head toward the elections in November.

Is it appropriate that Mark Zuckerberg's huge company, one of the wealthiest people in America, should be leaned on by the Federal Government to restrict the free flow of information?

And, by the way, the more this happens, the more the American public begins to accept it, which is really scary. The share of U.S. adults that say the Federal Government should restrict false information—and, of course, who is going to determine what false information is?—has gone up from 40 percent to 55 percent. Over half of Americans think the Federal Government ought to weigh in on restricting false information.

I think this is particularly a problem, sadly, with the Democratic Party. When I was a child, the Democratic Party prided itself on unfettered free speech, and they got into things like pornography and that sort of thing. Now, it becomes the Democratic Party who is more in favor of restricting speech compared to Republicans, 70 percent to 40 percent.

Americans have to wonder: Do we want to turn this country into a country more similar to the Soviet Union or Maoist China in which the government decides what is truth and what is not truth?

This is one of the things that makes America unique, one of the reasons why we are proud to be Americans, and now people are beginning to say that this is perhaps not a good idea at all.

But now I will deal with the third issue that I think is incredibly important, maybe other than the southern border, the most important issue facing America today, and that is the breakdown of the family.

There have always been people—people that say mom and apple pie is everybody's favorite, they are profamily and wish they could have a mom and a dad at home. In fact, there

have always been powerful people in history beginning with the radical leftists in the mid-1800s who felt the family was restricting and felt that it is something that we should break away from, destroy. This is one of the things that began to come out of the French Revolution in the 1780s, and to this day, some people view the French Revolution as something that should be looked upon favorably.

In 1848, Karl Marx—and many people read Karl Marx to this day—believed there was a need to abolish the family. He put that in “The Communist Manifesto.”

Mr. Speaker, 50 years later with the rise of the feminist movement, or 100 years later, radical feminist, Kate Millett, said that destroying the American family was necessary to bring about the cultural revolution that she wanted. Powerful feminists in the 1960s, a time of upheaval in America, a time when changes were made in America, the radical feminists wanted to weaken the American family.

A lot of times people aren't that outspoken about it because I believe the majority of Americans believe strong families are good, but there is a small minority, a very powerful minority, who wants to break down the family.

Angela Davis, a powerful radical, well respected by the hard left, in the sixties, seventies, and eighties came out against the traditional family.

Later on, Black Lives Matter, which exploded on the scene about 5 years ago, called for an end of the western-prescribed nuclear-family structure. Think about all the businesses that gave money to Black Lives Matter. Think of all the prominent politicians—many of them in this room. Now, they may say, oh, I wasn't for that part of their program. Think about that, people wanted to get rid of the “western-prescribed nuclear family.” Black Lives Matter were all on board and presented it to be a positive thing.

Now, to what degree has this institution, the American Government and the U.S. Congress played in weakening the American family?

Beginning in the 1960s with the Great Society, Lyndon Johnson—who I think was the worst President we ever had certainly until now—began a program in which an ever-expanding number of entitlements were doled out almost conditioned upon not having two parents, usually not a father, in the household.

George Gilder in the late seventies wrote a book “Wealth and Poverty” about this program. And what he pointed out is that certain segments of society felt it was great when somebody got pregnant out of wedlock because they would be eligible for all sorts of government benefits, be it food stamps, in particular; be it the low-income housing tax credits, which also benefited the very rich; be it the earned income tax credit, which is much easier to get if both parents are