

more than the size of several States, but they go on, push the Border Patrol out of the way, take their jobs, and really demean them. Morale is as low as it has ever been.

The last kicker on top of this is when the administration orders the Border Patrol agents to underreport, to skew the statistics, and to basically be forced into lies about how many people are coming in, especially those on the terrorist watch list.

We have a serious problem. People need to be brought up on charges for that, not the Border Patrol guys who are trying to execute their plan, but people in the administration who are telling them to lie about it. How pathetic. How deranged.

We have a lot of choices to be making in the next few months here. The American people are tired of the crime, and they are tired of the sieve at the border. They can make some very clear choices if they want to improve this.

In my home State of California, Proposition 36 will go that way, but also demanding from their politicians that they care about them, their communities, their storefronts, and their ability to do normal business like the United States used to until this administration has made such a farce of our borders and fighting crime.

Americans must pay attention this fall and ongoing.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his comments.

Madam Speaker, I will quickly reiterate that I appreciate my colleagues for not only tonight but the last several months in communicating some of the reality that we see on the ground.

Policy matters. Policy leads directly to good or bad outcomes back home in our districts. We need to be recognizing what is going to create better outcomes and, if we have made mistakes, be willing to own it and move forward and find better ways to address the issues that our Nation faces.

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

#### HONORING KIMBERLY WYARD ON HER RETIREMENT

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. Madam Speaker, I rise today with deep gratitude to honor a remarkable woman and extraordinary leader, Kimberly Wyard, who is retiring after 50 years of service at Northeast Valley Health Corporation, NEVHC.

Kim's tireless dedication has transformed NEVHC into a lifeline for countless families and individuals, particularly those in our most vulnerable communities.

Kim joined NEVHC in 1974, just a year after the organization opened its

very first health center in the city of San Fernando. In the five decades since, her vision and leadership have guided NEVHC's growth to 18 health centers, providing over 300,000 medical, dental, and behavioral health visits every year, as well as nine WIC sites serving more than 38,000 participants.

What started as a single clinic has evolved into a vital network under Kim's unwavering commitment to providing care where it is needed most.

As CEO since 1996, Kim has embodied the spirit of service, ensuring that low-income families, immigrants, and underserved communities have access to quality healthcare. Her leadership, compassion, and relentless drive have changed lives by giving hope and health to those who might otherwise go without.

However, Kim's service wasn't limited to her role as CEO. She worked her way up from positions like director of the adolescent health program and clinic administrator, and she represented our community at the local and national levels, always advocating for more equitable healthcare access. Her heart has always been with the people she serves, and that love for her community has been the driving force behind any of NEVHC's success.

Today, as she steps into a well-earned retirement, I thank Kim Wyard on behalf of so many for her lifetime of service. She has built a legacy that will continue to enrich the lives of people in our community long after her work is done.

I thank Kim for everything she has done for the Northeast Valley Health Corporation and for the thousands of families whose lives she has touched. Her dedication, compassion, and leadership will forever be remembered.

When I was a little boy, my family—my 11 brothers and sisters, my mother, and my father—used to go to NEVHC. That is where we got our healthcare.

How the world turns and how it flows. I used to go visit NEVHC, and Kim was one of the people to receive me. Now that I am a Congressman and she has advocated not only for NEVHC but for healthcare for all, she has been someone who comes to my office to visit with me.

I am grateful for Kim. May she retire and have a wonderful future in whatever she chooses to do.

#### HONORING RICHARD ALATORRE

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, on this important day of Hispanic Heritage Month, I rise to honor my friend, my colleague, and a true pioneer of Latino empowerment, Richard Alatorre.

Richard Alatorre was born on May 15, 1943, in Boyle Heights, California, the son of Joe Alatorre, of El Paso, Texas, a repairman at a stove factory, and Mary Alatorre, of Arizona, a beautician. Richard and his sister, Cecilia, were brought up in East Los Angeles.

Richard found his passion for politics and civil service very early in his life when he was class president at Garfield

High School and volunteering on John F. Kennedy's Presidential campaign.

Richard would also volunteer for Leopold Sanchez, who became the first Latino judge elected in California.

Richard attended Cal State-Los Angeles, where he earned a B.A. degree in sociology. He would go on to earn his master's in public administration from the University of Southern California.

Richard was a man of many hats and roles. He was a professor at Cal State-Los Angeles and UC-Irvine. He taught night courses at the Federal prison on Terminal Island, and he was the western regional district director for the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund.

During the 1968 Chicano walkouts and the 1970 moratorium, Richard fundraised bail money and advocated to the judges on behalf of the protesters who were arrested for a fairer bail arrangement.

□ 1845

What do all these roles have in common? Richard had a gift to uplift the voiceless and the defenseless.

Soon enough, Richard's community would see his ability and power grow, even more as he embarked on a career of elected public service. In 1972, at the age of 29, Richard Alatorre was elected to the California State Assembly, where he quickly moved up the ranks and became the Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means.

During his time in Sacramento, he fought for farmworkers' rights, increased educational opportunities for migrant families, childcare for children with special needs, and the desperately needed prison reforms.

Looking around the halls of Sacramento, Richard noticed that not a lot of people looked like him. He knew that the State's Latino community was immense, yet their representation in Sacramento was very minimal.

Richard cofounded and was the first chair of the California Latino Legislative Caucus, which at the time had only five members. Today, because of his vision, we can proudly say we have 37 Latino State assembly members and State senators in Sacramento, California.

He took it upon himself to increase Latino representation throughout all of California. When then-Speaker Willie Brown appointed Richard as chair of the 1980 election and reapportionment committee, Richard was able to gain an expertise on the Voting Rights Act. Richard set out to combat the discrimination in the halls of government, and he wanted to ensure Latino voices were heard through elected offices.

He was responsible in overseeing the reapportionment of California legislative and congressional districts. Today, the State of California has 15 Congressional Hispanic Caucus members in Washington, and this is attributed to the foundation Richard Alatorre built. Richard had the foresight to believe in

Latino representation, and he accomplished this in his own right.

In 1985, Richard Alatorre made history once again when he was elected to represent the 14th District in the Los Angeles City Council. He would be the first Latino in nearly a quarter century to be elected to the city council.

For his first task, he wanted to ensure there would be more Latino representation during the reapportionment process on the Los Angeles City Council. Richard Alatorre can be credited with increasing the number of two predominantly Latino districts that existed during his time, to the current five Latino district seats that the community has today.

In addition, Richard ensured that Black representation was also present during his time, and he worked to strengthen the three council districts for the Black community. His work extended beyond just diversifying elected positions and districts.

On the Los Angeles City Council, Alatorre was successful in diversifying the city's workforce, especially the Los Angeles fire and police departments, expanded city support for antigang programs, ensured Los Angeles County metro projects, such as the gold line, were started.

He mentored countless people, not just in the east side of Los Angeles, but throughout California and the United States. Richard's unvarnished manner in expressing himself represented the authenticity and passion needed to push for Latino families in these halls of power.

We unfortunately lost Richard last month on August 14, 2024. Richard was a man of the people. His funeral at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Los Angeles was attended by hundreds, from elected officials to businessowners, from members of academia to the working-class people from the east side he once proudly represented.

As it was said by one of his former staffers at his funeral service: "Richard didn't just see our potential, he nurtured it."

This is who Richard Alatorre was: someone who saw our people's potential and moved mountains to help reach our full promise. These are powerful words for a powerful man. Richard deserves our recognition and our eternal gratitude.

Assembly Member and Councilman Richard Alatorre is survived by his beautiful wife of 33 years, Angie; by their sons Derrick and Darrell; by their daughter Melinda; granddaughters Gabriela, Mariela, Daniela, and Kaycee; his sister, Cecilia; son-in-law, Patrick; daughter-in-law, Dayana; and his faithful Black Lab, Reggie.

Gracias, Richard Alatorre, for being a mentor, a teacher, and, most importantly, a friend to so many of us.

#### HONORING CHAMPIONS IN SERVICE

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in appreciation of a great organization in my hometown of Pacoima, California, Champions in

Service, and honor them today as "valley fighters," "valley luchadores."

This organization is run by two incredible community leaders, whose tireless work has transformed countless lives in the San Fernando Valley and beyond, William "Blinky" Rodriguez and Bobby Arias. Together, they have embodied the essence of leadership and dedicated their lives to promoting peace, hope, and opportunity for the most vulnerable among us.

In 1990, tragedy struck Blinky Rodriguez' family when his 17-year-old son, Sonny, was killed in gang-related violence. Faced with this devastating loss, Blinky could have turned inward. Instead, he channeled his grief into a powerful mission of peace.

With unwavering faith and determination, Blinky helped broker the Valley Unity Peace Treaty, an agreement that significantly reduced gang violence in the San Fernando Valley, and he gained international recognition for it.

In the years that followed, Blinky teamed up with Bobby Arias, an athletic director and educator with a deep passion for helping young people. Together, they founded Champions in Service, an organization committed to preventing gang violence, fostering community engagement, and creating opportunities for those caught in cycles of violence and poverty.

Since 1993, Champions in Service has been a beacon of hope. Their street intervention team, made up of dedicated community intervention workers, is on the front lines of violence prevention. These individuals, many of whom have lived experience within the communities, mediate conflicts, reduce gang retaliation, and offer critical services, such as court advocacy, tattoo removal, and job assistance. These efforts have not only saved lives, but have given countless individuals a second chance.

The work of Champions in Service goes beyond street intervention. Their comprehensive reentry program supports formerly incarcerated individuals as they reintegrate into society, providing everything from housing and employment assistance to educational opportunities and expungement support. They offer mentorship, job readiness programs, and vital mental health services, all aimed at breaking the cycle of violence and incarceration.

Mr. Speaker, Bobby Arias, Blinky Rodriguez, and their entire staff are the very definition of Champions in Service. Their commitment to uplifting those who have been marginalized by poverty, addiction, and trauma is an inspiration.

They understand that every individual, no matter their past, deserves the chance to rewrite their future. Through their work, they have helped countless individuals turn away from violence and toward a path of hope, education, and empowerment.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, I honor the juvenile justice work of Champions in Service.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF DR. ARMIDA ORNELAS

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary leader in education, Dr. Armida Ornelas, the president of the Los Angeles Mission College, as a "valley fighter," "valley luchadora."

For nearly 30 years, Dr. Ornelas has been a tireless advocate for educational equity, ensuring that community college students, particularly from disenfranchised communities, have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Dr. Ornelas' journey is a testament to the transformative power of education. Raised in east Los Angeles by immigrant parents from Jalisco, Mexico, she grew up understanding the value of hard work and perseverance.

A proud graduate of Garfield High School, Dr. Ornelas went on to pursue her undergraduate studies at UCLA, earning a double major in chicana and chicano studies and sociology.

She continued her academic journey with a master's degree in public policy studies from the University of Chicago and later earned her doctorate from UCLA School of Education.

Dr. Ornelas has had a successful and enduring career in Los Angeles' community college district. Dr. Ornelas served as a faculty member in political science and then served as the vice president of instruction at East Los Angeles College before becoming President at Los Angeles Mission College 3 years ago.

Dr. Ornelas' leadership at Los Angeles Mission College has been pivotal. Her vision for the college goes beyond providing quality instruction. She understands that education is a tool that can transform lives and uplift entire communities.

Under her guidance, the college has expanded its programs and services to ensure that students not only succeed academically, but are also prepared for the workforce and empowered to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Her dedication to economic and educational opportunities extends beyond the classroom. Dr. Ornelas serves on the boards of the Valley Economic Alliance and the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, where she continues to champion initiatives that improve access to education and job opportunities for low-income and underrepresented individuals.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Armida Ornelas' work has touched the lives of countless students and families, giving them the tools to achieve their full potential. It is my honor to pay tribute to Dr. Ornelas for her tireless efforts in advancing education and recognize her as a "fighter," "luchadora" during this Hispanic Heritage Month.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF MICHELLE FUENTES MIRANDA

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize an extraordinary community leader, advocate, and change-maker, Michelle Fuentes Miranda, as a "valley fighter," "valley luchadora."

As the founder and CEO of the Alliance for Community Empowerment, ACE, Michelle has dedicated over 30 years of her life to transforming the futures of at-risk youth and adults. Her unwavering commitment to justice, empowerment, and community building has made a profound impact not only in Los Angeles, but across California.

Michelle's story is one of resilience and dedication. As a granddaughter of migrant farmworkers who became successful businessowners and community leaders in California's Central Valley, she was inspired by her family's legacy of service.

She channeled that inspiration into her life's work, founding ACE in 2013 with a clear mission: to provide leadership development, education, and supportive services to high-barrier youth in some of the most underserved communities.

Through Michelle's visionary leadership, ACE has grown to become essential in the San Fernando Valley, offering programs that change lives. One of her hallmark achievements is the YouthBuild leadership development program, which provides opportunity for younger individuals with hands-on vocational training and support services.

ACE's innovative approach empowers young people to create meaningful change in their lives and their communities, breaking the cycles of poverty and violence that too often define their experiences.

In 2023, recognizing a growing gap in housing for formerly incarcerated individuals, Michelle launched House of RUTH, which stands for resilience, unity, transformation, and hope. It is a transitional reentry house that provides a fresh start for those reentering society after incarceration.

Her commitment to providing pathways to success for justice-impacted individuals through education, workforce development, and trauma-informed care has been a lifeline for many.

Madam Speaker, Michelle Fuentes Miranda is a tireless advocate for justice, and her impact reaches far beyond the walls of ACE. As vice chair of the Cares First Community Investment Council, she advises Los Angeles County on alternatives to incarceration. Her expertise is also sought on the California DOJ Reentry Roundtable, where she continues to shape policies that promote rehabilitation and community resilience.

Michelle's work has been recognized locally, regionally, and nationally. She has received numerous awards, including Woman of the Year in the 45th district of the California State Assembly, and the Human Rights Award from the California Association of Human Rights Organizations.

Madam Speaker, Michelle Fuentes Miranda has dedicated her life to lifting others up while continuing to inspire generations to come. It is my

honor to recognize her for her incredible community service during Hispanic Heritage Month.

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HONORING TIA CHUCHA'S CENTRO CULTURAL AND BOOKSTORE

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a cultural gem in the Northeast San Fernando Valley, Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, it is fitting that we recognize the profound impact this institution has had on the arts, literacy, and cultural empowerment in our community.

For over 23 years, Tia Chucha's has been a transformative force, providing a space where ancestral knowledge and creative expression intersect to enrich lives and foster growth in my district.

Founded by renowned author Luis J. Rodriguez, cultural bearer Trini Rodriguez, and community activist Enrique Sanchez, Tia Chucha's emerged from a vision to address the neglect of a historically marginalized community. At a time when the Northeast Valley had no bookstores, art galleries, or cultural spaces, these three visionaries created a sanctuary for wellness, artistic expression, and empowerment.

Inspired by the spirit and creativity of Luis Rodriguez's aunt, Maria de Jesus, affectionately known as Tia Chucha, this center has become a home for artists, activists, and community members alike.

Tia Chucha's provides a wide range of free to low-cost programs, including visual arts, music, dance, creative writing, Mexica indigenous language and cosmology, healing arts, and more. Their intergenerational and bilingual programming is a lifeline for so many, offering opportunities to connect with culture, art, and community.

Tia Chucha's is more than a bookstore; it is a source of inspiration and transformation for many. Their independent bookstore and small cross-cultural press, Tia Chucha's Press, continues to promote social activism and amplify voices that have been historically marginalized. Their commitment to making culturally relevant books accessible, representing stories by people of color, and supporting local authors is nothing short of remarkable.

The mission of Tia Chucha's is deeply rooted in the belief that art and creativity are essential to the growth and healing of individuals and communities. By fostering a space where everyone can imagine, create, and express themselves, Tia Chucha's is improving the quality of life for future generations to come.

As we honor the legacy and ongoing contributions of Tia Chucha's during Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize that they are more than just a cultural center. They are Valley Luchadores for the arts, champions of social justice, and a testament to the power of creativity in bringing about positive change.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore on nearly 23 years of transformative work. I thank them for their continued dedication to the arts, literacy, and community empowerment.

HONORING LIFELONG LEADER AND ADVOCATE FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS, RUBEN RODRIGUEZ

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a lifelong leader and advocate for community progress, Ruben Rodriguez, executive director of Pueblo y Salud, Inc., as a Valley Luchador.

Mr. Rodriguez has been a steadfast advocate for more than 32 years, working to improve the social conditions of the Northeast San Fernando Valley and beyond.

As the founding board president and current executive director of Pueblo y Salud, known affectionately as PyS, Mr. Rodriguez has been instrumental in shaping the organization's mission to address alcohol, drug, and tobacco abuse prevention, while also focusing on education and community strength.

Headquartered in the Northeast San Fernando Valley, PyS has become a guiding force for those seeking better health policies, grassroots involvement, and social justice.

Under his leadership, the organization has grown its reach, partnering with local hospitals and community organizations to tackle critical issues like COVID-19 mitigation, youth education, and environmental justice.

Mr. Rodriguez's work goes far beyond the walls of Pueblo y Salud. He has been a founding member of the Los Angeles Drug and Alcohol Policy Alliance and the California Alcohol Policy Alliance. His leadership in these coalitions has been vital in shaping alcohol and drug prevention policies throughout California. He has also served as a member and board president of Alcohol Justice, an organization dedicated to holding the alcohol industry accountable for its impacts on our communities.

In addition to his work in substance abuse prevention, Mr. Rodriguez has been an enduring advocate for social justice. He has spent decades fighting for better wages, equal access to education, Latino political representation, comprehensive immigration reform, and the removal of harmful substances from minority communities. His dedication to these issues has inspired countless individuals to join him in the fight for a more just and equitable society.

As a proud husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Mr. Rodriguez has also made it his personal mission to raise a family of social activists. His daughter, Celeste Rodriguez, has followed in his footsteps, serving as the mayor of the city of San Fernando, further extending the legacy of community service and leadership that Mr. Rodriguez has cultivated.

Madam Speaker, I have known Mr. Rodriguez since childhood and our families share decades of friendship. This

connection has only strengthened our commitment to advancing the well-being of the people of the Northeast San Fernando Valley.

As we honor Ruben Rodriguez during Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize his lasting dedication to our community. His leadership at Pueblo y Salud, his advocacy for social justice, and his commitment to the health and well-being of our neighborhoods have earned him the title of a true Valley Luchador for community progress.

Madam Speaker, I, once again, thank Ruben Rodriguez for his tireless work and for motivating future generations. HONORING THE REMARKABLE SUCCESS STORY OF VALLARTA SUPERMARKETS AND THE GONZALEZ FAMILY

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable success story of Vallarta Supermarkets and the Gonzalez family, whose dedication and hard work have shaped this grocery store into a cornerstone of the Hispanic community throughout California.

The Vallarta family's story begins in Jalostotitlan, Jalisco, Mexico, where Enrique Gonzalez, Sr., and his four brothers grew up on a small farm. Raised with a strong work ethic and a deep sense of family, they immigrated to the United States in the 1960s, seeking the opportunities this country promised.

They worked in restaurants, from bussing tables to cooking, and saved every dollar they could with the hope of one day achieving the American Dream.

That dream began to take shape in 1985 when Enrique Sr. opened the first Vallarta Supermarket in Van Nuys, California. What started as a modest 1,000-square-foot *carniceria*, with a small staff and weekly sales of only about \$3,500, has since grown into a thriving supermarket chain with 53 supermarket locations across California and nearly 8,000 employees.

From the very beginning, Vallarta Supermarkets distinguished itself by offering fresh, authentic Latin foods, catering to the growing Hispanic community that was often overlooked by larger grocery chains.

The success of Vallarta Supermarkets reflects their family's commitment to service, integrity, and community. What began as a small family-run business is now a vital resource for thousands of families, offering not only groceries but also employment opportunities, career advancement, and community support.

The Gonzalez family never forgot their roots or the values that brought them here, and they continue to give back to the community they serve. Through charitable donations, school partnerships, and support for local organizations, Vallarta has become a pillar of empowerment for those they serve.

Madam Speaker, the Vallarta Supermarkets legacy is an inspiring testament to the strength of the Hispanic

community and the power of perseverance. As Vallarta Supermarkets approaches its 40th anniversary, the family's dedication to customer service and quality products remains unwavering. Their continued commitment to enriching the lives of those in their communities is a shining example of the American Dream in action.

It is with great pride that we honor the Gonzalez family and Vallarta Supermarkets as Valley Luchadores during Hispanic Heritage Month. Their journey is a reminder of the extraordinary contributions that Latino Americans have made and continue to make throughout our Nation.

HONORING JAMES ACEVEDO AS A VALLEY LUCHADOR

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend and mentor, James Acevedo, as a Valley Luchador.

James Acevedo is a dedicated champion of civic engagement and a relentless advocate for the political and economic empowerment of Chicanos and Latinos.

Born in East Los Angeles to Elvira and Edward Acevedo in 1952, James grew up witnessing the deep socioeconomic disparities affecting his community.

From an early age, he recognized the need for Latino representation and empowerment, both politically and economically. His journey began in East Los Angeles College, where he met Cesar Chavez and became involved in the grape boycotts and the Chicano Moratorium, joining movements that protested both the Vietnam war and the social inequities facing Chicanos at home.

At Cal State Los Angeles, Mr. Acevedo continued his activism, becoming chair of MEChA, the *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán*, where he organized events that brought together community members and Chicano leaders to celebrate their culture and push for progress.

His educational pursuits did not stop there. He went on to earn his master's degree and was selected for the prestigious CORO Fellowship in public affairs.

During his time at CORO, he further developed his leadership skills under the mentorship of political icons such as Gloria Molina and corporate leaders, all while continuing his graduate studies at USC.

Throughout his storied career, James Acevedo has left a legacy as a political strategist and consultant, playing a critical role in more than 100 successful campaigns across the Western United States. His work with figures such as Mayor Tom Bradley, Mayor Richard Riordan, then-Council President ALEX PADILLA, and many others helped shape the political landscape of Los Angeles and beyond, ensuring that Latino voices were heard and represented at every level of government.

In addition to his political work, Mr. Acevedo has also made significant con-

tributions to the healthcare field and real estate development. As CEO of American Health Care, he managed hospitals across southeastern Los Angeles and was appointed to President Clinton's Health Care Reform Initiative, advocating for better healthcare for the middle class. His leadership extended to the redevelopment of areas hardest hit by the 1994 earthquake, where he founded Neighborhood Empowerment and Economic Development to build affordable housing in the San Fernando Valley.

James Acevedo's civic engagement did not end with his professional achievements. He founded Grapevine Development, where he continues to develop commercial and multifamily projects across California, always advocating for community stakeholders to have a voice in the development of their neighborhoods.

James Acevedo has spent his life dedicated to creating opportunities for the Latino community, from his days organizing protests and voter outreach to his work as a political consultant and developer. His tireless commitment to civic engagement, social justice, and community empowerment has made him a true Valley Luchador for civic engagement.

Madam Speaker, I personally also thank James Acevedo for taking an entire 6 months to never accept my answer of: "No, I am not running for office." After 6 months of him approaching me and convincing me that I needed to be the first person from my community to be elected to high office, I went home to my wife, Norma—she didn't know any better—and she said: "Yes. Why don't you do that?"

Twenty-eight years later, I was able to achieve that opportunity then, in 1996, to be the first State assemblyman Latino to represent the San Fernando Valley and then to join the city council, along with my good friend, now United States Senator ALEX PADILLA, and now I get to serve for 12 years in the United States Congress.

Madam Speaker, I thank James Acevedo for not taking no for an answer. I thank him so much for helping so many of us to achieve what we did not see for ourselves, but what he saw in us to make sure that we can give back to our community. He deserves this recognition and much, much more.

HONORING XOLO MARIDUENA

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Xolo Mariduená, a rising star and proud representative of the Latino community in the world of entertainment.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, it is crucial to recognize the trailblazers who are breaking barriers and inspiring future generations, and Xolo Mariduená is one such individual.

Through his talent, dedication, and commitment to representing his cultural heritage, Xolo has become a shining example of what it means to be a true Valley Luchador for entertainment.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, Xolo comes from a rich cultural background, with roots in Mexico, Cuba, and Ecuador.

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His journey to stardom is a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of authentic representation in the entertainment industry.

From an early age, Xolo embraced his heritage and the values instilled by his family, and he has used his platform to proudly showcase Latino culture in his work.

Xolo Mariduena first captured the public's attention with his role as Miguel Diaz in "Cobra Kai," the sequel series to the iconic "Karate Kid" films.

At just 16 years old, Xolo brought depth and nuance to the character, earning widespread praise and solidifying his place as a major talent in Hollywood.

His portrayal of Miguel, a young man navigating the challenges of life and martial arts, resonated with audiences worldwide, particularly within the Latino community.

In 2023, Xolo took his career to new heights with his leading role as Jaime Reyes in "Blue Beetle," marking the first time a Latino superhero has been featured in a live action film.

This role is a significant milestone for Latino representation in Hollywood, and Xolo has embraced it with pride, fully aware of the impact it has on young Latinos seeing themselves reflected in a superhero on the big screen.

His commitment to authenticity in portraying Jaime, a character deeply connected to his Mexican-American roots, brings a powerful cultural resonance to the film, showcasing the importance of family, tradition, and community.

Beyond his on-screen work, Xolo has ventured into music with the release of his debut single "On My Way" and cohosts the Lone Lobos podcast with fellow actor Jacob Bertrand.

His diverse talents and ventures speak to his passion for storytelling and connecting with audiences in multiple ways.

He continues to push boundaries and challenges the norms in the entertainment industry, showing that Latino stories and experiences are not only valid but essential.

Xolo's journey is one of inspiration for the next generation of Latino artists and actors. His ability to navigate the challenges of Hollywood while staying true to his roots is a testament to his character and resilience.

By embracing his cultural identity and using his platform to advocate for representation, Xolo is paving the way for a more inclusive and diverse entertainment landscape.

Madam Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize Xolo Mariduena as a Valley Luchador for Entertainment. His accomplishments as an actor, musician, and advocate for Latino represen-

tation makes him a source of pride for the entire Latino community.

We are excited to see what the future holds for Xolo as he continues to break barriers and inspire us all.

#### RECOGNIZING EVA LONGORIA

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Eva Longoria, a trailblazing Latina who has made indelible contributions to the world of entertainment, philanthropy, and advocacy as a Valley Luchadora.

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, Eva Longoria grew up as the youngest of four daughters in a Tejano family. Her early life experiences in south Texas shaped her deep understanding of the socioeconomic disparities that Latinos face.

Longoria's pursuit of education led her to earn a bachelor of science in kinesiology from Texas A&M University-Kingsville and later a master's degree in Chicano studies from California State University Northridge in California.

Her academic journey reflects her deep commitment to understanding and advocating for the Latino community, especially Latina women in STEM careers.

Eva Longoria's breakout role as Gabrielle Solis on "Desperate Housewives" brought her international recognition, earning her multiple awards, including a Golden Globe nomination and multiple Screen Actors Guild awards, but her career in entertainment extends far beyond acting.

As a producer and director, she has used her platform to bring diverse stories to the forefront, most notably through her production company, UnbeliEVable, with an emphasis on Eva, Entertainment.

Her directorial debut with "Flamin' Hot" garnered critical acclaim and highlighted her versatility and skill in the industry.

In addition to her entertainment career, Ms. Longoria has been a successful businesswoman, launching her own fashion and perfume lines and co-owning Angel City FC, a national women's soccer league team.

Her influence reaches far beyond Hollywood as she continually advocates for more representation of Latinos in all sectors of society.

One of the most impressive aspects of Eva Longoria's career is her commitment to philanthropy. Through her Eva Longoria Foundation, she focuses on closing the educational gap for Latinas and supporting Latina entrepreneurs.

She is also the founder of Eva's Heroes, a not-for-profit organization that helps young adults with developmental disabilities, and she serves as a national spokesperson for PADRES Contra El Cancer. Her dedication to these causes has earned her the admiration and respect of communities across the country.

Beyond her work in the arts and business, Eva Longoria has played an instrumental role in persevering and

showcasing the rich history of Latino contributions to the United States.

In recognition of her commitment to promoting Latino heritage, she was appointed by President Obama as a commissioner to the National Museum of the American Latino Commission.

This prestigious appointment highlights her dedication to ensuring that the stories, artifacts, and experiences of Latinos over the past 500 years are preserved and shared with future generations.

The National Museum of the American Latino will provide a permanent home for the vibrant cultural legacy of Latinos, and Eva's involvement is a testament to her deep connection to her heritage and community.

Throughout her life, Eva Longoria has used her voice to advocate for issues that matter most to the Latino community, including immigration reform, voter engagement, and education.

She continues to be a beacon of strength and leadership, motivating countless Latinos to pursue their dreams and create lasting change for all.

Madam Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Eva Longoria as a true Valley Luchadora for Entertainment. Her contributions to the arts, her unwavering dedication to philanthropy, and her advocacy for Latino empowerment have made her a symbol of pride and inspiration for the entire Latino community.

We are grateful for her continued efforts to uplift and transform lives through her work, and we look forward to all of her future accomplishments.

#### HONORING JESSICA ALANA SANCHEZ

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate and memorialize a fellow Californian who passed away recently at the young age of 38, Jessica Alana Sanchez.

Jessica was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. Her family's first home was located about 1 mile from the international border with Mexico.

Her parents, Jose Luis Sanchez and Estela Mora, instilled in her a beautiful faith, the love of service, and a duty of working toward justice.

Her early life experience helped shape her world view. Her perspective was binational. She had family in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, and felt at home there as much as she did in El Paso.

Jessica was not constricted by physical walls or political boundaries. Rather, she was inspired by building bridges of understanding and by creating community.

Although she was a Texan through and through, she made her mark in California. Jessica dreamed of attending Stanford University.

Even though others cautioned her about the school's competitive admission process, she was undeterred. In 2004 she applied and was accepted.

It was at Stanford University where she met the love of her life, Rolando

Manzo. After completing her undergraduate studies and internships at Stanford, Jessica and Rolando moved to Boston in 2009 where Jessica attended Boston University School of Law, graduating with a Juris Doctor degree in 2012.

In 2013, Jessica was admitted to the State bar of California. Her first job was with a corporate law firm, but she realized that her true calling would be to use her profession in service to others.

In 2016, Jessica began working for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles, otherwise known as CHIRLA.

There, she championed social justice and advocated on behalf of migrants and refugees. Her calling was public service, but her love and passion was her family.

As her professional career was taking off, Jessica and her husband, Rolando, embarked on their most important adventure, one that would give new meaning to their lives, becoming parents to Leila Itzel.

Sadly, in 2020, Jessica was diagnosed with cancer. For 4 years, she courageously battled. She didn't waste any time.

Jessica was constantly surrounded by those she loved most. She hugged and kissed her beloved daughter, Leila, every chance she got.

Jessica passed away on June 24, 2024. She was taken from us too soon. Yet, she left us with some important lessons: to live our lives in service to others and to take advantage of every waking moment we have with those we love.

Jessica Alana Sanchez is survived by her daughter, Leila Itzel Manzo; her husband, Rolando Manzo; her sister, Jacqueline Sanchez; her mother, Estela Mora; and her father, Jose Luis Sanchez.

I extend my deepest condolences to Jessica's loved ones. We will continue to keep them all in our prayers, and we will continue to honor her achievements and her legacy.

"Rest in peace, Jessica," "Descansa en paz."

Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, today I have taken the opportunity to use the privilege and the honor that has been bestowed upon me by the voters of the 29th District of California to share stories and recognition of people in my district and people throughout California who have given so much of themselves.

Some of them have passed, and some of them are still with us, but one of the themes of today's recognitions is that they are all Latinos.

They are Latinos at heart but true American citizens, true Americans, people who give of themselves every single day and appreciate this country oh, so much.

It pains me to hear anyone in this great country cast aspersions upon people who appear to be immigrants or who are, in fact, immigrants.

The fact of the matter is that the United States of America was built on the backs of immigrants, some who were brought here against their will, and others who found this great country to be their new home because they were forced to leave their country for whatever atrocities, and in many cases, fleeing for their lives.

Asylum seekers, Madam Speaker, are people who come to some other place to seek the opportunity to live. That is what an asylum seeker is.

Today, on this planet, we have more people leaving their homes, leaving their home country to go to someplace where they hope and pray they can find safety and a new life.

The United States of America has been that beacon, that place where people from Europe, from Africa, from the Americas, from all over this planet, have always found the beautiful, open arms of Americans to say, welcome. It pains me to hear people say anything other than that, and they call themselves true Americans.

To me, the United States of America truly is at its best when we give of ourselves, and we welcome others to do the same, as best they can in their new life.

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Not everybody who flees their country comes to the United States. Some do. Not every country welcomes them with open arms.

It is painful to me when I hear or see people call themselves real Americans and disparage people who come to this country to give of themselves, to give the best of themselves, and some people say you are not welcome. That is disgraceful. That is un-American.

Some people may look at me and assume that I wasn't born here. I was born here, and I am so proud to call myself an American citizen. Some people may look at my parents, who have now passed away, and look at them and hear their voice or their accent or hear them speak in Spanish and assume that they don't belong here. I am sorry. They came here. They belonged here, and they gave this country their best, just like millions and millions and millions of immigrants who have come to this country for centuries now.

It is my prerogative to share what I believe is true about our country. It is my prerogative to stand here in the well of the House of Representatives and speak the truth about our country and the truth about people who don't all look alike, people who don't all speak perfect English, and people who don't look like some people who believe that if you don't look like them, you don't belong here.

I say this because I hope and pray that that bigotry, that xenophobia stops. I pray that people learn to exude the best of themselves instead of spew-

ing hate and vitriolic words toward their neighbors, toward people who are here to give the best of themselves. Regardless of their country of origin, regardless of their accent, regardless of how well or not that they may speak English, they belong here. This is my country. This is their country. This country isn't just made for you. It is made for you and me.

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

#### FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 9106. An act to direct the Director of the United States Secret Service to apply the same standards for determining the number of agents required to protect Presidents, Vice Presidents, and major Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates, and for other purposes.

H.R. 9747. An act making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2025, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5009. An act to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 815. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the female telephone operators of the Army Signal Corps, known as the "Hello Girls".

#### TAKE DEMOGRAPHICS SERIOUSLY

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

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, we have 30 minutes here, and I am trying to do sort of a wrap-up. As folks know, the House actually passed a continuing resolution. I personally wish we had battled it out and stayed and just tried to see if we could get the Senate to do some of the work.

I have been trying to find ways to get this place and the U.S. Senate, but also voters and, Heaven knows, the Presidential candidates to take seriously the demographics and what is going on in our country but also the world. We are not the only one.

I am going to bring, as I often do, the boards, but let's try to put this in a type of perspective. This article says that the world has now surpassed its record of debt. Believe it or not, it was during the Napoleonic wars that the amount of debt in the world actually skyrocketed.