

After 81 years, America now keeps her promise of leaving no one behind.

First Lieutenant Melofchik's name is inscribed on the Wall of the Missing at the Britany American Cemetery in Montjoie Saint Martin, France. Soon, a rosette will be placed beside his name, signifying that he has been accounted for and returned to his country.

But behind the uniform was a beloved son, brother, uncle, and young man with dreams. Gerald was the son of Stephen and Pauline, and brother to Stephen, Marie, and Henry. Though his 18 nieces and nephews never had the privilege of knowing him in life, they grew up honoring his memory through stories of a young man with a competitive spirit on the tennis court, a fondness for Hershey's chocolate bars, and a heart that deeply loved his family and his country.

His life was short, but his impact endures. His courage helped liberate a continent that was occupied for several years under the Nazis. His sacrifice helped preserve the freedoms we enjoy today. And now, generations later, he is welcomed home with full honors, dignity, and profound gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, let it be known that the United States of America does not forget her heroes. Today, we honor First Lieutenant Gerald J. Melofchik, who was a patriot flying into danger so that others might live in peace. May his memory live forever in the hearts of the Nation he served.

On behalf of a grateful nation, we welcome home First Lieutenant Gerald J. Melofchik. His mission is complete. His nation will always remember. His courage will never be forgotten. I thank him for his service and sacrifice.

HONORING MR. KEITH JOHNSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mr. Keith Johnson, a 32-year-old musician, author, and cultural ambassador who continues to carry forward his family's musical legacy while proudly representing the Mississippi Delta on an international stage. Known on stage as the "Prince of the Delta Blues," Mr. Johnson is the great-nephew of McKinley Morganfield, better known to the world as Muddy Waters.

Born and raised in Glen Allan, a small community south of Greenville on the edge of Lake Washington in Washington County, Mr. Johnson grew up immersed in a rich tradition of gospel music. While many of his peers focused on sports, his childhood was filled with music and church singing. By the age of 15, he was already a member of the church choir and went on to form his first gospel quartet, The Delta Sensations.

During his senior year at Riverside High School, Mr. Johnson wrote his first official song, *Outstanding Love*, which was adopted as the school's anthem. This pivotal moment sparked his deeper commitment to music and inspired him to pursue it professionally. His passion led him to the Delta Music Institute at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi, where he studied audio engineering, songwriting, and performance.

In 2018, Mr. Johnson earned an MBA with a focus in human resource management, com-

binning his passion for music with business expertise to manage all aspects of his career. That same year, he released his debut album, *Come to Mississippi*, honoring his home State's blues legacy. He has since toured internationally, performing across Europe and later in Brazil through a cultural exchange sponsored by Delta State University.

Alongside his solo work, Mr. Johnson performs with Morgan Freeman's Blues Symphonic Orchestra, also known as the Morgan Freeman Blues Experience, contributing vocals, guitar, and harmonica. He has toured nationally with the group over the past two months.

Mr. Johnson, a published author of two books and currently at work on his third, is also channeling his creative energy into music. He is in the process of recording a new album, *Deep in the Mud*, alongside Grammy-nominated producer Vasti Jackson at the legendary Royal Studios in Memphis—a place steeped in musical history. Mr. Johnson describes the collaboration as "history in the making," a testament to both the studio's legacy and the project's cultural significance.

Driven by a deep sense of purpose, Mr. Johnson remains unwavering in his commitment to honoring his roots. He is passionate about shining a spotlight on Glen Allan and the broader Mississippi Delta, working tirelessly to ensure their rich cultural heritage receives the recognition it deserves on the global stage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the achievements of Mr. Keith Johnson, and in recognizing his extraordinary contributions to music and blues in Mississippi and his unwavering commitment to proving that the blues still carries power, soul, and purpose.

HONORING SONIA BUSTAMANTE AS ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S 8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT'S WOMEN OF THE YEAR

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sonia Bustamante, recognized as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year. As Chief of Staff to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors since 2015, Ms. Bustamante has demonstrated exceptional leadership, vision, and commitment to advancing equity and inclusion across local government. A dedicated public servant and coalition builder, Sonia has led transformative initiatives that strengthen civic engagement and expand opportunity for underrepresented communities. Her coordination of the 2025 Community Impact Fund Townhalls exemplifies her commitment to accessibility and inclusion, ensuring multilingual participation, hybrid access, and youth involvement in the policymaking process. Sonia's leadership has been instrumental in advancing key county initiatives, including the Guaranteed Income Pilot, immigrant legal services, and the African American Wellness Hub, all of which are designed to address systemic inequities in health, housing, and economic stability. A proud UC Berkeley alumna with a

bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Leadership from California State University, San Bernardino, Sonia brings both academic rigor and deep community insight to her work. She is also a mentor to the next generation of public servants, overseeing the county's youth internship program and empowering young leaders to pursue careers in civic engagement and public policy. Known for her ability to manage complex projects and unite diverse stakeholders, Sonia embodies the very spirit of public service, guided by empathy, integrity, and action. On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, I am proud to recognize Sonia Bustamante for her outstanding leadership, her lifelong dedication to equity and justice, and her enduring contributions to the people of Contra Costa County.

TRIBUTE TO LORETTA YOUNG

HON. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the extraordinary service and enduring legacy of Ms. Loretta Young, Commander of American Legion Post 365. Her steadfast leadership and tireless advocacy have shaped the lives of countless veterans and community members across South Florida. Ms. Young will be honored in Sunrise, Florida, for more than 25 years of distinguished service as Commander, the second-longest tenure of any Post Commander in the State of Florida.

Born in 1941 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and raised between the city and the heartlands of South Jersey, Ms. Young is a proud member of the Lenape Nation of New Jersey. Her early years were marked by academic excellence and a deep sense of civic duty, inspired by her father, a retired Philadelphia firefighter. That sense of duty led her to enlist in the United States Air Force, where she served with honor at Travis Air Force Base in California, achieving the rank of A3C in Administration and Base Personnel.

Since assuming command of Post 365 in the year 2000, Ms. Young has exemplified the values of patriotism, leadership, and service. Her tenure includes roles as Post Historian, Service Officer, Executive Officer, and 9th District Commander. She has served on national committees for Legislative Affairs and National Security, and chaired the Department's JROTC and Junior Shooting Sports Program for over two decades. Her leadership has extended far beyond the American Legion, touching civic institutions, youth organizations, and advisory boards throughout Broward County. Ms. Young's community engagement is both vast and impactful. She co-founded the JROTC Support Association in 2006 and currently serves as its President. She has chaired the 23rd Congressional Academy Board for the past ten years and was appointed to the Veterans Advisory Board in 2015. Her commitment to youth, veterans, and civic education has earned her recognition as a Pioneer Day Recipient by the City of Sunrise and induction into the Broward Senior Hall of Fame in 2015.

Her journey of service began in earnest after retiring from American Airlines in 1995,

when she began volunteering at assisted living facilities and later co-founded the Professional Women Veterans Association, the first non-profit in Broward County dedicated to female veterans. Through workshops, retreats, and outreach, she helped elevate the voices and needs of women in uniform and played a formative role in the early development of Mission United, a program supporting homeless veterans. Ms. Young's story is one of resilience, vision, and unwavering commitment. She is a global traveler, a devoted mother and grandmother, and a beacon of optimism who sees the glass half full. Her life reflects a profound dedication to service, safety, and the belief that every challenge is an opportunity to uplift others.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Loretta Young for her decades of leadership, advocacy, and community-building. Her legacy is etched into the fabric of South Florida and serves as a powerful reminder of the impact one individual can have when guided by purpose, compassion, and a deep love for country and community.

REMEMBERING HMONG COMMUNITY LEADER WA CHONG VANG

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Wa Chong Vang and to offer my deepest condolences to his family and express my sincere appreciation for his leadership and service in the Hmong Community.

Wa Chong Vang was the son of notable Hmong General Vang Pao who fought alongside American troops in the often forgotten "Secret War" against communism in Laos. While headlines of the Vietnam War dominated American news outlets, tens of thousands of Hmong soldiers supported separate CIA coordinated conflicts in Southeast Asia. When American troops withdrew from the region, many of the Hmong who fought alongside them followed. Many fled through the jungles of Laos, and some found new lives in America. Once in America, many settled and built businesses and communities in Minnesota.

Wa Chong was one of those refugees. After watching his father and family members serve in conflicts at home, Vang was determined to continue his family's service in the United States. In 1974, he became the first Hmong American accepted to the United States Military Academy at West Point. However, this incredible achievement would not be his last, or most impactful.

When his father passed away, Vang stepped up to fill his father's shoes. He worked with the community to preserve their shared history, honor the Hmong veterans who served alongside U.S. assets in Southeast Asia, and unite the community.

Wa Chong Vang's life reminds us that patriotism and duty knows no borders, and that the quest for freedom falls on all who have the courage to defend it. While we will miss his spirit and quiet leadership, his legacy will carry on not only in the hearts of his family and friends, but in the country and community he loved and served for decades.

To offer my condolences to the Vang family, we mourn Wa Chang's passing with them and pray that his memory will bring them peace and comfort during this difficult time.

HONORING SRIYA SRINIVASAN AS ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S 8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT'S WOMEN OF THE YEAR

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Sriya Srinivasan, as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year. Sriya is a remarkable young leader from Solano County whose dedication to public service and advocacy has already had a profound impact across California. At just seventeen years old, her leadership exemplifies the spirit of community empowerment and equity. Sriya's most notable achievement is her instrumental role in the passage of AB 2229, the "Know Your Period Act." Drawing from her own experiences, she championed menstrual education as a vital component of the California Healthy Youth Act, lobbying tirelessly, shaping legislative language, and testifying before lawmakers. Her efforts garnered widespread community support, securing over 500 signatures and multiple co-signers, ensuring millions of California students gain essential knowledge and dignity around menstrual health. In addition to her legislative work, Sriya has made history as the youngest-ever Student Trustee and is currently the Student President of the Solano Community College Board, where she advocates fiercely for student needs and equity. She also founded the campus Reproductive Health Center, providing free access to menstrual and sexual health products—an initiative that removes barriers and supports student wellbeing. Her visionary leadership and compassionate service make her a shining example to her peers. On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Sriya Srinivasan for her invaluable contributions to our community.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPH SEEBODE

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Joseph Seebode on his retirement from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Seebode has dedicated 44 years of Federal service to USACE and his many achievements and contributions as an Environmental Engineer should be celebrated.

As Deputy District Engineer and Chief of Programs and Project Management for the New York District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Joe oversaw a diverse team of engineers and scientists delivering major military and civil works construction, and regional infrastructure improvements in New York and New Jersey. Mr. Seebode's leadership has

played a pivotal role in delivering life-saving technical expertise and environmental restoration during national crises. Together, we have worked on projects to reduce storm and coastal flood risks to protect residents, properties, and infrastructure. He has overseen vital beach replenishment, dredging, and flood control projects, working in coordination with federal, state, and local entities. It has been an honor to work with Joe to protect our communities, and I and the residents of the 6th Congressional District of New Jersey thank him for his leadership.

In his early career, Joseph served as the official Corps liaison to the City of New York in the wake of the 9/11 World Trade Center tragedy. Throughout his tenure, he also was on the USACE Leadership Team leading immediate response actions in wake of Hurricane Sandy to include unwatering tunnels, emergency dredging and debris removal. As our communities worked to recover from these devastating disasters, Joseph Seebode led the way.

Mr. Seebode has received numerous awards during his career including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civilian of the Year Award, the De Fleury Medal for engineering excellence, the Department of Army Civilian Award for Humanitarian Service, a Presidential Certificate of Merit for lifesaving while on official duty, the Department of Defense Environmental Engineer of the Year Award, and the State of New Jersey's highest Heroism Award. He has recently been recognized with the Distinguished Executive Award by the New York City Federal Executive Board and was inducted as a Hero of the Harbor.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Joseph Seebode on his retirement. It is my privilege to recognize his remarkable contributions to our Nation and offer my best wishes as he enters this new stage in life.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FLOOD PREVENTION ACT OF 2025

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Flood Prevention Act of 2025. This bill would amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA) to make the District of Columbia an eligible entity. The House passed this bill as part of the Coastal and Great Lakes Communities Enhancement Act in the 116th Congress.

This bill would make D.C. eligible for federal funding for coastal zone management and give D.C. oversight of federal agency actions that affect its coastal waters. D.C. urgently needs the protection of the CZMA because of serious flood risks that affect federal assets, residents and businesses in D.C., including the National Mall and federal buildings in the Federal Triangle area.

The CZMA provides planning and technical services to assist states in protecting, restoring and developing coastal communities and resources. Once the federal government approves a state's coastal management plan, the state becomes eligible for federal funding and federal agency actions must be consistent with the state plan.