

HONORING PAUL V. WILSON, JR.

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, from the 24th district of the great state of Florida, I rise today to honor Paul V. Wilson, Jr. for his philanthropic efforts on behalf of at-risk youth. I am proud to present him with a Congressional Award from the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project in acknowledgment of his exceptional contributions to our community.

Each year, a distinguished opportunity arises to be recognized as a Role Model Mentor. I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Wilson on his selection to join our esteemed mentors. The success of this program, which has thrived for over 32 years, relies heavily on contributions like his. His unwavering support has inspired me and highlights the profound impact of the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project.

As the son of a Congresswoman, Mr. Wilson has embraced leadership and service, demonstrating a strong commitment to uplifting others. His involvement in various community initiatives and passion for mentorship exemplify the values of the 5000 Role Models Project, which empowers young men of color.

Mr. Wilson's engagement with youth and dedication to their growth are commendable. He illustrates the importance of perseverance and community service, serving as a true role model. I recognize his achievements with pride and express my gratitude for his commitment to our community.

I congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition, and I look forward to witnessing his future accomplishments.

HONORING RHONDA SEWARD

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of Rhonda Seward—a distinguished recipient of the Hoosier Women Hero Award and an extraordinary U.S. Army veteran, leader, and mentor who embodies the highest ideals of service to our Nation and our communities.

Rhonda enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1996 and served more than 20 years with distinction including deployment during Operation Iraqi Freedom. She is recognized for her leadership, integrity, and mentorship having excelled in the areas of logistics, public affairs, and soldier support. Following her retirement, she continued her mission as a Peer Support Specialist, Veterans Court Mentor, and advocate for homeless, disabled, and justice-involved veterans.

Rhonda has shaped veteran support networks statewide as Public Affairs Officer for AMVETS Post-99 and Commander of NABVETS Chapter 0133, all while advocating for veterans before the Indiana General Assembly. Her dedication also extends to civic engagement including participation in the FBI Citizens Academy, suicide prevention efforts, Wreaths Across America, and Special Olympics Indiana. In her role as Junior ROTC in-

structor, Rhonda is also a powerful role model for the next generation.

Recently, Rhonda earned gold medal at the 2025 National Veterans Creative Artists Festival for her poetry, exemplifying both the impact of military service and the healing power of creative expression. Her life reflects the highest ideals of service, courage, and empathy. Rhonda openly shares her challenges to inspire and support others, offering hope and healing to veterans and the broader community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Rhonda Seward for her outstanding service to our country and her unwavering dedication to her fellow veterans. I thank Ms. Seward, for making Indianapolis a stronger and more compassionate community through her diligent service.

HONORING NHAN LE

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Nhan Le as our Constituent of the Month for his work at Outdoor Outreach.

Outdoor Outreach is a local nonprofit that connects young people to the transformative power of the outdoors. The organization provides opportunities for students to access parks and beaches, teaches them to access bike, surf, rock climb, kayak, hike and more, and connects them with peers and mentors who believe in their potential.

Nhan first encountered Outdoor Outreach as a student at Hoover High. As an Outdoor Outreach participant, he learned how to mountain bike, completed a five-day backpacking trip in the Eastern Sierras, and gained valuable life skills.

Nhan was inspired by his experience with Outdoor Outreach and decided to apply for their Leadership Program. He completed 300 hours of instruction and is now a Youth Programs Assistant. In this role, Nhan has the opportunity to show students the power of the outdoors and provide the same outstanding mentorship he once received.

Nhan works hard every day to give back. As an immigrant from Vietnam who overcame hardship, he is now a role model for so many students and a strong advocate for improved access to outdoor spaces.

Nhan's efforts have made our communities a better place, increasing chances for people to explore, grow, and find themselves, and I am honored to recognize him.

HONORING ROBERT "BOBBY" P. KOCH

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Congressman DAN NEWHOUSE, to honor Mr. Robert "Bobby" P. Koch, as he retires after 33 years of dedicated service and commitment to Wine Institute and our American wine commu-

nity. As Co-Chairs of the Congressional Wine Caucus, we have seen firsthand his many contributions to the long-term success and growth of American grown and produced wine.

Bobby graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts in Government and Politics. Before joining Wine Institute, Bobby held senior positions in Congress with former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and former House Majority Whip Tony Coelho, bringing valuable legislative experience to his work in the wine community. He is married to Doro Bush Koch, and they have four children and two grandchildren.

Bobby's service on behalf of wineries throughout California, Washington, and wine regions all over the country spans more than three decades during which the wine sector experienced significant growth while facing numerous challenges. He joined Wine Institute, the only organization advocating for American wine at the state, federal, and international levels, in 1992 as Vice President of Federal Government Relations. Bobby later became Senior Vice President in 1996 and was appointed President and CEO in 2003, a position he has held for 22 years. Under his leadership, Wine Institute has grown to represent more than 1,000 California wineries and businesses responsible for over 80 percent of U.S. wine production and more than 95 percent of American wine exports. Wine Institute also doubled its membership, and the organization built a best-in-class staff dedicated to protecting and promoting the wine community.

Throughout his tenure, Bobby's leadership has been guided by his unwavering belief in the positive impact of wine as one of America's most highly value-added agricultural products. He has rightfully been recognized for his ability to bridge the interests of small and large wineries in policy debates, leading Wine Institute and the broader wine community with a unified voice. Major achievements during his tenure include expanding direct-to-consumer wine shipping to 48 states and the District of Columbia, defeating wholesaler monopoly protection legislation in numerous states, and securing passage of the Craft Beverage Modernization Act, which has enabled American wineries to reinvest over \$600 million to grow their businesses since 2018. Bobby also secured Congressional affirmation in the 21st Amendment Enforcement Act and preserved the balance of federal and state authority in alcohol regulation.

Bobby's leadership extended to sustainability and international market development. Under his direction, Wine Institute positioned America as a global leader in wine quality, innovation, and sustainability. Today, 90 percent of California wine is produced in certified sustainable wineries, and 65 percent of the state's vineyard acreage is certified sustainable, demonstrating the community's commitment under Bobby to environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and community engagement. He increased American wine exports with dedicated marketing programs in more than 40 countries and serves as a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade, as well as on the board of directors of the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Mr. Robert "Bobby" P. Koch for his more than three decades of dedication, service and leadership on behalf of our American wine community. Therefore, it is

fitting and proper that we honor him here today as he retires from Wine Institute.

RECOGNIZING LISA JANICKI

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate Lisa Janicki's service as a County Commissioner for Skagit County, Washington.

Commissioner Janicki was first elected to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners in November 2014, following a career of more than thirty years as the Chief Financial Officer for Janicki family businesses.

During her eleven years in office, Commissioner Janicki has been a tireless leader in fighting the opioid epidemic across our communities and Washington state, advocating for policy solutions, programs, and investments to end this scourge and repair the incredible damage it has caused. She has worked collaboratively with the county's partner jurisdictions to increase services available for community members in need of urgent crisis support. She was a founding member of North Star, a partnership between the county commissioners and government, the mayors of the four largest cities in Skagit County, and service organizations to end homelessness and enhance effective delivery of crisis response, recovery, and support services countywide. Commissioner Janicki also oversaw the development of the STAR Center providing acute behavioral health care services to Skagit County, in addition to the county's first permanent supportive housing development, Martha's Place, and the Skagit First Steps Shelter.

Commissioner Janicki's heartfelt leadership, strategic foresight, and compassion are an inspiration to leaders and community members in Skagit County and across northwest Washington. She has been a transformational advocate for the people of Skagit County.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to commend Commissioner Janicki for her outstanding leadership and vision, dedication to serving her community, and the enduring legacy she has helped to cultivate. I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude for her service.

HONORING RONALD L. BOOK

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, from the 24th district of the great state of Florida, I rise today to honor Mr. Ron Book for his exemplary philanthropy and commitment to at-risk youth.

It is my privilege to present Mr. Book with a Congressional Award on behalf of the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project, recognizing his significant contributions to our community and steadfast support for the youth of South Florida. Mr. Book has been selected as a distinguished Role Model Mentor, joining the esteemed ranks of our dedicated honorees.

His leadership and advocacy for the homeless community in Miami-Dade County have profoundly impacted many lives. Through his efforts, he has raised awareness of homelessness issues and championed innovative solutions, ensuring that individuals have access to safe housing and essential resources. His dedication to public service and commitment to creating opportunities for young people, particularly those from underserved backgrounds, have yielded substantial benefits.

His legal expertise and community engagement have provided invaluable support and empowered our youth. The mission of the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project aligns closely with Mr. Book's advocacy. His mentorship of young men of color exemplifies the values we instill in future leaders. His involvement in community programs and willingness to share knowledge inspire those around him. It is with pride that we recognize Mr. Book's achievements and express our gratitude for his dedication to improving the lives of youth. His leadership continues to inspire positive change in our community. I congratulate Mr. Book on this well-deserved recognition. I look forward to further collaboration in fostering the growth of young leaders in South Florida.

We now recognize Mr. Ron Book for his exemplary leadership and advocacy on behalf of the homeless community in Miami-Dade County. Mr. Book has made a significant impact on numerous lives through his unwavering dedication. His efforts have not only highlighted the pressing issues faced by individuals experiencing homelessness but have also fostered the development of innovative solutions aimed at improving their conditions.

RECOGNIZING THE CLASS OF INTERNS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO ILLINOIS' 13TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the wonderful class of interns who served in my office during the fall 2025 semester. Their incredible dedication to public service and commitment to learning has been truly inspirational, and the contributions they have made to Illinois' 13th Congressional District have left a significant impact.

In my Washington Office, I was honored to work alongside Henry Scriven-Young, Carter Wood, Maurice Mueller, Ally Denton, and Ethan J.S.H. Reed. These five interns have worked tirelessly to support my staff and have done an excellent job navigating the turbulent nature of Congress. Especially during a government shutdown, when their time with my office was cut short, these five individuals have shown an immense desire to learn and serve others, regardless of the circumstance.

Back in Illinois, I was proud to work with Keziah Gragg in my Springfield Office and Addison Merritt and Ryan Miller in my Campaign Office. Especially following a turbulent government shutdown, these three interns played an integral role in supporting constituents from Central and Southern Illinois to obtain much needed assistance from the federal

government. Their commitment to constituent service by assisting my casework team has been amazing to see, and I am so proud of the work they have accomplished serving the people of Illinois' 13th Congressional District.

The impact that these individuals had on my office will be felt for years to come, and we will be very sad to say farewell to this amazing group of interns. I thank Henry, Carter, Maurice, Ally, Ethan, Keziah, Addison, and Ryan, for their service. I wish them all the best as they continue their professional and academic journeys.

RECOGNIZING AMERICA 250: INDIAN WOODS

HON. DONALD G. DAVIS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 2025

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today, as part of the "America 250" celebrations, I honor the rich tapestry of history that is Indian Woods and Bertie County, North Carolina. As the community's residents commemorate America's Semiquincentennial, let us reflect upon 250 years of resilience, progress, and unity that have shaped the country.

Indian Woods is a community with an extraordinary history that dates back hundreds of years, predating the arrival of Europeans in North Carolina. The residents of this roughly ten-square-mile area of southern Bertie County, situated between the Roanoke River and Roquist Creek, have fought in many of our Nation's historical conflicts, including the Revolutionary War, and lived through significant eras and transformations. It is one of America's original "melting pots" of Native American, European, and African peoples, which today form a single enduring community.

In honor of this rich history and as part of the America 250 celebrations, the Blue Jay Recreation Center hosted the historical educational event: "Bertie's Forgotten Black and Native Patriots of the Revolutionary War," on October 3 and 4, 2025. In partnership with the North Carolina Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, the Indian Woods Historical Preservation Society, the Blue Jay Recreation Center, and North Carolina Central University, the event highlighted the Revolutionary War patriots from Indian Woods and Bertie County. Thanks to the deep research of Dr. Arwin D. Smallwood on the subject, the program featured reenactments of several historical figures whose ancestral lineage included Native Americans and African ancestors: William Lowry Woods (1758 to 1847), Jacob Braveboy (1759 to 1810), and Arthur Wiggins (1761 to 1830) to name just three of the over 29 recorded from Bertie County.

For the country's birthday, let us celebrate our past achievements and recommit ourselves to the ideals of unity, resilience, and progress that have defined the Union. Together, let us continue to write the next chapter of the county's story, guided by the enduring spirit of those who came before us. I wish a happy Semiquincentennial to the Indian Woods Community and Bertie County. I look forward to another 250 years of heritage, community, and boundless possibility.