

the species that inhabit them are critical to the balance and vitality of our oceans.

Unfortunately, coral reefs and the marine life living in them are under threat due to the high demand for ornamental reef species. This has resulted in unsustainable and harmful collection practices, such as overcollection of species, particularly younger specimens; reef-dredging; the use of harmful gill nets, explosives, or poisons; and excessive mortality of specimens during transit.

These practices not only deplete species populations but also cause irreversible damage to the coral ecosystems themselves. In some cases, this damage has led to the extirpation of species from specific areas and the introduction of invasive species, which further disrupts the ecological balance. The long-term consequences of these practices are the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of habitats that are vital to the health of our oceans.

Many of these harmful collection practices occur in international waters, particularly in regions such as Southeast Asia, where most of the world's coral reefs are located. In many of these countries, there are weak or insufficient regulations to prevent destructive collection methods. As the largest importer of ornamental reef fish and corals, the United States bears a significant responsibility in perpetuating the demand for these species, which drives destructive practices in coral reef ecosystems worldwide.

We have an opportunity to take decisive action. My Saving NEMO Act would prohibit the importation into the United States of protected reef species taken through unsustainable or destructive practices. Going beyond complementing the Lacey Act, CITES and the Endangered Species Act, my bill will also fill a critical gap by addressing those species that, while not endangered, are still collected through methods that harm marine ecosystems. It also includes a process for delisting a species if the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce determine that its collection no longer poses a substantial risk to its sustainability, providing an incentive for the industry to adopt responsible practices.

Furthermore, the Saving NEMO Act would support industries that focus on sustainability and environmentally friendly practices, which is the future of the industry. In doing so, this bill will ensure that the aquarium trade evolves in a way that protects our oceans and promotes long-term ecological balance.

I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation to help safeguard our coral reefs and the diverse marine life they support. By restricting the importation of ornamental reef species collected through harmful practices, we can protect these vital ecosystems for future generations.

Mahalo.

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#### HONORING PABLO H. CATAÑO

### HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a beloved public servant from the 43rd Congressional District of California, and a favorite son of the City of Hawthorne, the Honorable Pablo H. Cataño.

Pablo Cataño was born in Texas on June 29, 1939, and moved to California with his high school sweetheart in 1954. They raised three children, two daughters and a son, Pablo, Jr., who tragically passed away in 1985. Pablo worked as a machinist at Rockwell International, where he contributed to the development of the escape hatch on the Apollo 11 spacecraft. His time at Rockwell also ignited his passion for social justice and political involvement through his active role in the union.

Pablo later became a political activist. He was proud of having marched with labor leader Cesar Chavez, and he worked with local politicians and various community organizations. He was admired by elected leaders for his activism and knowledge of city politics in Hawthorne and surrounding communities. This led to Pablo being hired as a District Representative for both California State Senators Teresa Hughes and Edward Vincent.

A pillar of the community, Pablo was supportive of and served on the board of several organizations in Hawthorne, which included Moneta Gardens Improvement, Behavioral Health Services, Hawthorne Lions Club, and the Hawthorne Moose Lodge 1746, just to name a few.

In 2001, Pablo Cataño was elected to the Hawthorne City Council, becoming the first Chicano/Latino elected official in the city. His leadership was recognized when he assumed the role of mayor pro tempore, and after serving two terms on the city council, he retired in 2009 to focus on his health following a stroke.

Pablo Hernandez Cataño passed away on November 3, 2024, leaving behind to cherish his memory, his daughters Sylvia and Cynthia, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and many close friends. On March 20, 2025, I will join Pablo's family, friends, and the entire Hawthorne community when the City of Hawthorne hosts a celebration of life for a great public servant, a devoted family man, and my friend, the Honorable Pablo Cataño.

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#### HONORING MELANIE THOMAS AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Melanie Thomas of Saint Cloud, Florida is the public affairs officer for the Orlando VA Health Care System (OVAHCS), where she leads strategic communication efforts to enhance public awareness and engagement for Veteran healthcare services.

With a strong background in public relations, media relations, and strategic communication, Melanie plays a vital role in shaping the organization's messaging, fostering transparency and strengthening connections with Veterans, stakeholders, and the broader community.

In her role, Melanie oversees media outreach, crisis communication, and community engagement initiatives, ensuring that Veterans and their families are well-informed about the services and resources available to them. She collaborates with leadership, government

agencies, and community partners to promote the mission of serving those who've served.

Driven by her servant leader approach and her commitment to effective communication, Melanie works diligently to amplify the voices of Veterans and highlight the impactful work of the Orlando VA Healthcare System. Her expertise in storytelling, branding, and stakeholder relations makes her an invaluable asset to advancing programming for Veterans and healthcare services.

Prior to her current role, she served as the public affairs officer for the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS), was a public affairs specialist and TCF intern for the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, and held a voluntary service assistant position with public affairs collateral duties at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Thomas holds a master's degree in business administration and an undergraduate degree in organizational communication with concentrations in public relations and rhetoric from Wilkes University located in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

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#### CELEBRATING THE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF GLADYS DIJI

### HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the 75th birthday of Ms. Gladys Dijj, who is a shining example of resilience, grace, and unwavering dedication to her family, community, and profession. Her life's journey has been dedicated to bettering the lives of those around her.

Born on February 14, 1950, in Clarion, Pennsylvania, Ms. Dijj has spent a lifetime inspiring others with her strength and compassion. She is the proud mother of three daughters and one stepson, and the cherished grandmother of twelve grandchildren, eighteen great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Beyond her impressive professional and community contributions, Ms. Dijj is known for her deep love of family and her passion for hosting family gatherings. Her matriarchal role is the cornerstone of her family's unity, and her wisdom continues to guide them across five generations.

A registered professional nurse and clinical nursing instructor, Ms. Dijj's career is a testament to her love of healthcare and education. She earned her Master of Science degree in Community Health Nursing from D'Youville University in Buffalo, New York, and has served in numerous roles, including as an adjunct clinical professor at D'Youville University. Throughout her career, she has impacted the lives of many through her work in mental health, substance abuse, and chronic illness care, as well as her contributions to nursing education. In her retirement, she also served as a Community Liaison for my office in the New York State Senate, where she helped the constituents of the 63rd Senate District with various issues they were facing and attended many community events and meetings as my representative.

Ms. Dijj's dedication to community service is equally impressive. She has served on

boards, supported initiatives for cultural diversity, and been an active member of organizations such as the National Black Nurses Association and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Ms. Gladys Diji, a woman of poise and resilience, whose influence extends to her beloved family and community. On this milestone birthday, we celebrate her extraordinary life, her enduring legacy, and the profound impact she has made on all who know her.

CONGRATULATING THE GRAND  
OLE OPRY ON 100 YEARS

**HON. JOHN W. ROSE**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a true American treasure that I have the privilege to represent in Congress. This year marks 100 years since the Grand Ole Opry first introduced audiences around the world to country music and to Nashville.

My home state of Tennessee is known for many things. If you had to list some of the most prominent, you might think of the Great Smoky Mountains of Elvis Presley, but you would most certainly include the Grand Ole Opry.

Nashville is known around the world as Music City USA. That would not be the case had it not been for the Opry. But the longtime show isn't exclusive to Tennessee's story. No, it's part of American culture.

The Opry was around before the Great Depression and World War II. It has seen a lot, endured a lot, and served as a beacon of hope decade after decade.

The program's venue has moved within Nashville a few times, but it is primarily known for two locations the Ryman Auditorium off Broadway and its current location on Opry Mills Drive. Both locations enjoy hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

Without the Grand Ole Opry, we would likely not know the names Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, or Willie Nelson. Heaven forbid, we might not even know Dolly Parton had it not been for the show.

WSM, those are its call letters, was one of the first radio stations to connect urban and rural culture. The Opry was also a first to transform a hobby into a marketable and lucrative industry.

Crossover artists are not uncommon today. But they were virtually nonexistent before 1925. The Opry hosted honky-tonk, bluegrass, gospel, and rockabilly performers. This paved the way for what we know today as country music.

From music legends to up-and-comers, musicians around the world rightfully revere the Grand Ole Opry as a place of prestige, history, and continued relevance.

There are fewer than 100 members of the Grand Ole Opry. It is indeed an elite crowd of men and women who made the world better, who embody country music, and who are part of our shared heritage as Americans. In fact, that membership sits at the top of dozens of obituaries among some of our nation's finest performers.

This year, TripAdvisor ranked Nashville 6th among the best American travel destinations.

More than 17 million people visited last year. That is in large part because of the influence of the Grand Ole Opry over the last 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, any seat in the house will do at the Grand Ole Opry. To bear witness to the iconic barn background behind the stage, the lights that look like stars above you, and the acoustics around you makes for an unforgettable evening. No matter how many chances I get to see a show in person, I always sense the history, the importance, and the joy that the Grand Ole Opry represents.

As the United States Representative of Tennessee's 6th Congressional District, I rise today to enthusiastically congratulate the Grand Ole Opry on a century of entertainment and a century of significance. I am confident the man or woman in my shoes 100 years from now will feel compelled to do the same.

RECOGNIZING JANETTE GIBB FOR  
HER SERVICE AT THE MAN-  
CHESTER VA MEDICAL CENTER

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of APRN Janette Gibb of the Manchester VA Medical Center. Her commitment to going the extra mile and providing the highest standard of healthcare to veterans in Manchester exemplifies the virtue of service to community and country.

One story in particular highlights Janette's positive impact. In August, 2021, a veteran was at the Manchester VA for routine cardiac tests, administered by Janette. During the tests, the veteran entered sudden cardiac arrest and collapsed in the hallway. A MERT team was called, but Janette immediately took action. She understood what the veteran was experiencing and administered CPR until the veteran started responding and the MERT team arrived. This veteran credits Janette with saving their life.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I thank Janette Gibb for her selflessness and dedication to the veterans she has cared for. By giving so much to those who served our Nation, she has made her community a better place. Granite staters are grateful that our brave veterans may receive care from professionals like Janette, and I wish her all the best in the years to come.

HONORING DANIELLE MCCARTHY  
AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN  
CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR WOM-  
EN'S HISTORY MONTH

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in 2016, a neurosurgeon removed an invasive meningioma—an aggressive, grapefruit-sized tumor—from Danielle McCarthy's brain. The tumor, lovingly named Loretta, formed on her brain's temporal lobe, and she was told she would never walk or speak again. However, her post-surgery

condition was deemed a miracle by her doctors, and she began her slow recovery. Danielle would endure multiple major surgeries unrelated to her tumor over the next six years. During the height of COVID-19, destiny struck. Joey Perfito, her best friend and instrumental in Danielle's recovery, helped adopt a rescue puppy, already named Loretta. With the support of Joey and her strong-willed puppy, now named Loretta Josephine, Danielle relearned how to live and adapt to her new life. Together, they turned Danielle's hardships into triumphs. Danielle was determined to give back to those who saved her life: neuroscience and pet adoption. One thing Danielle remembered from her old life was fashion. Danielle and Joey created Loretta Josephine Boutique, an online shopping experience for women that gives back to the community. Through the boutique, Danielle donates her time to support those with brain trauma and pet rescue.

Both animal and health initiatives drive their vision daily as they continue to uplift and inspire others through community engagement. This prompted Danielle and Joey to start a nonprofit called Brain Warriors Foundation of America. The duo's budding nonprofit focuses on fundraising to further neuroscience research and give financial support to caregivers and patients suffering brain-related injuries. Danielle recognizes she's on borrowed time. She's grateful to be a voice for those who have lost their own battle and those who are currently struggling during their recovery. They encourage all to join Team Loretta Josephine Boutique as they continue to make a difference in Central Florida—the place they call home.

CELEBRATING THE CHINESE CLUB  
OF WESTERN NEW YORK

**HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 18, 2025*

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the incredible legacy and ongoing contributions of the Chinese Club of Western New York, a cornerstone of our community that has played an essential role in preserving and promoting Chinese culture for over six decades. Originally founded as the Chinese Club of Buffalo in 1954, this vibrant organization has grown into a vital part of our region, bringing together hundreds of active members, including families, professionals, and youth, all united in a shared purpose of cultural exchange and community building.

Under the leadership of President Beiyang Liu and Director of External Affairs Yanhong Na Baranski, the Chinese Club of Western New York continues to thrive and has consistently demonstrated its commitment to charitable service, cultural preservation, and the enhancement of social bonds among its members. Through endeavours like the Buffalo Chinese School, the Western New York Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Buffalo Chinese Health Professionals, and various youth and senior clubs, the Chinese Club of Western New York has created spaces for learning, networking, and mutual support across generations.

The Chinese Club of Western New York's efforts go far beyond just serving its members.