

team's upward trajectory. Matthew learned to row at the Episcopal School of Dallas and has continuously pushed the team to realize their limitless potential, serving as an example of the many dreams that can come true in Texas' 24th Congressional District.

Congratulations to the Founders Rowing Club on all then success. I look forward to continuing to cheer these women on.

**AFFORDABLE SHIPPING FOR ALL
ACT**

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Affordable Shipping for All Act, a bill to end discriminatory and exclusionary shipping practices faced by residents and businesses in the non-contiguous areas of our country, particularly Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

This blatant discrimination and exclusion is illustrated by Hawaii, my home state. We are over 2,500 miles from the West Coast and depend on shipping to bring in more than 90 percent of the products we need. Like our other non-contiguous family, we do not have the same manufacture, transport and delivery options as does the contiguous continental U.S.

Rather than treating us equally, residents and businesses of the non-contiguous U.S. face four persistent and unfair shipping practices that drive up costs and make life harder for millions of Americans.

First, as confirmed by the Federal Trade Commission, many online retailers outright refuse to ship basic products to our parts of the United States, effectively treating our areas as if we are foreign countries. This exclusion prevents millions of Americans from even accessing essential goods.

Second, even when retailers do offer shipping to the non-contiguous areas, they frequently deny customers free shipping options, even though such options are readily available for customers in the contiguous U.S. This is true even when the actual cost of shipping from the continental U.S. to a non-contiguous area is higher than to another location in the continental U.S. This leaves residents in these areas at a distinct disadvantage when trying to purchase products online.

Third, when private shipping services are made available, the prices are often inflated and bear no reasonable relation to the actual distance. For example, the cost to ship a 2-pound package from Los Angeles to Hawaii can exceed \$45, while the same package from Los Angeles to New York City, the same distance, costs only \$14. This price disparity is both unreasonable and unjust.

Fourth, the United States Postal Service (USPS) also treats the non-contiguous areas unfairly. It recently created a new Zone 10 for shipments to Hawaii, Alaska and other non-contiguous areas, which will increase shipping rates for Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail and USPS Ground Advantage packages to and from those locations by 5 percent. The introduction of Zone 10 fundamentally discriminates against the non-contiguous parts of our country, which runs directly counter to the

foundational USPS charge to provide equal access to the U.S. mail.

The Fair Shipping Access for All Act will ensure that no shipping company, including the USPS, can impose discriminatory rates or exclude non-contiguous areas from receiving shipments. It will also require that shipping rates for non-contiguous areas reflect the actual cost of service, rather than arbitrary price increases.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It's about fairness, equity and ensuring that all Americans, regardless of where they live, have equal access to affordable shipping options.

Mahalo.

RECOGNIZING ALAN HAFFA'S CAREER AS A DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alan Haffa, a dedicated public servant to the people of Monterey. Dr. Haffa's commitment to public service began at a young age as an Eagle Scout, where he learned valuable skills like leadership and service. Through this organization he met his wife, Arlene, to whom he has been married for 26 years and shares two children. After graduating from Monterey High School, Dr. Haffa received a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and M.A.'s in Comparative Literature and Classics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Following graduation, Dr. Haffa set out to work in the service of others.

In 2004, in response to divisions within, the the local school district, Monterey Peninsula Unified (MPUSD), Dr. Haffa rose to the occasion and became a board member, steering the board in a clearer direction. He was influential in questioning district consultants regarding the construction of 11 new schools. Dr. Haffa had serious concerns regarding the number of children these schools would have and where residents would work. Had the district sold bonds for the new schools, the district would still be in debt today, and schools in Monterey would have had to close. The leadership that Dr. Haffa displayed, questioning out-of-state consultants, protected students and citizens.

In addition to his community service, Dr. Haffa taught at Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) and directed the Gentrain Program, an interdisciplinary, team-taught course in civilization. At MPC he has served on the Faculty Senate and for the past two years he has been co-chair of the College Council, which is the highest advisory board to the college president. Dr. Haffa has also fought for lifelong learning at the college, and in 2011 he was the MPC Teachers Association faculty union co-negotiator.

RECOGNIZING EULESS POLICE DEPARTMENT SENIOR OFFICER CASEY SANDERS

HON. BETH VAN DUYN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Ms. VAN DUYN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Senior Police Officer Casey Sanders of the Euless Police Department for his 33 years of exceptional service to our community.

A graduate of Paschal High School in Fort Worth, Officer Sanders continued his education at Tarrant County College before serving as a Sergeant in the Texas Army National Guard for seven years. In 1992, he began his law enforcement career, graduating as salutatorian of his police academy class. Throughout his career with the Euless Police Department, Officer Sanders has taken on a variety of important roles, including Patrol Officer, School Resource Officer, Field Training Officer, Crisis Negotiator Team Leader, Critical Incident Stress Management team member, Peer Support team member, and Mental Health Officer in the HEB Behavioral Intervention Unit. He has also been an advocate for his fellow Guardsmen through his work with the National Guard Association of Texas.

Officer Sanders has received numerous awards during his time with the Euless Police Department, including Rookie of the Year, Certificate of Merit, and Certificate of Civic Achievement. He has also been honored with the Outstanding Service Award by the Euless Fire Department.

North Texas is safer thanks to Officer Sanders' decades of service. On behalf of a grateful community, I extend my deepest congratulations to Officer Sanders on his well-deserved retirement.

HONORING THE 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR MOTHER OF MERCY CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and admiration that I use today to celebrate a significant milestone in the history of our community—the 95th anniversary of Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Our Mother of Mercy is the only African American Catholic church in Tarrant County and the Fort Worth Catholic Diocese, making it a unique and invaluable institution in our region. Founded in January of 1929 by Father Narcissus Denis of the Josephite Fathers, the church began humbly, holding Mass in a house-turned-rectory and later in a converted drug store. Over the years, it has grown into a thriving parish and community center that continues to serve the diverse needs of its congregation.

Throughout its rich history, Our Mother of Mercy has been a steadfast pillar of faith in our community. It has produced leaders across various fields—elected officials, business leaders, community advocates, and television personalities—who have made substantial contributions both locally and nationally.

The church's commitment to service has also been exemplified by initiatives like the establishment of St. Veronica's Mission in the Lake Como area, which served the community for over 25 years.

Today, as it continues to be a cornerstone of our district, Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church remains dedicated to faith, unity, and outreach. Its ongoing legacy enriches the lives of all who are fortunate to be part of this vibrant community.

On behalf of the 33rd Congressional District of Texas, I extend my warmest congratulations to the parishioners, clergy, and leaders of Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church as they celebrate this incredible milestone. Their unwavering dedication to faith and service is an inspiration to us all. Let this recognition stand as a tribute to the church's ongoing legacy and its continued positive impact on Fort Worth and beyond.

HONORING LARRY CONDON

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor the life and memory of Larry Condon. A New York Advocate and well-respected man who dedicated much of his time providing transformative philanthropic funding to a host of initiatives. At the time of his passing, Larry was still working tirelessly for others. He was serving as Chairman Emeritus of the Mertz Gilmore Foundation, a Life Trustee at the New York Botanical Garden, and an honorary advisor to the Public Theater.

Larry became one of the six original trustees of the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, which during its 30-year life distributed 450 million dollars to the Public Theater, The New York Botanical Garden, the Joyce Theater, WNET, and many other cultural, environmental and civil rights organizations. This was coupled with his leadership of the Mertz Gilmore foundation which focused on climate change, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, community engagement, and the performing arts in New York City.

His work with the New York Botanical Garden was immense. Larry underwrote multiple initiatives including exhibitions, visitor programs, scientific works, and important capital projects including the Haupt Conservatory. Larry also worked diligently to protect and endow the LeEsther T. Mertz Library, the world's leading botanical library.

Larry Condon lived his life in pursuit of improving the world around him for generations to come. From his first job as a high school teacher to his philanthropic work, Larry provided growth and love to those around him. He will be sorely missed.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN HERO DR. RICHARD BENSON

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Dr.

Richard Benson, president of The University of Texas at Dallas. In 1980, Dr. Benson began his career in higher education as an assistant professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Rochester. He quickly progressed, serving as the dean for graduate studies in the College of Engineering and Applied Science and the chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. After, he spent 10 years heading the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering at Penn State, as well as 11 years as dean of Virginia Tech's College of Engineering. In 2016, Dr. Benson became the fifth president of The University of Texas at Dallas and has spent the past eight years overseeing monumental campus and academic growth.

His tenure at UT Dallas has seen the construction of two million square feet of new buildings, including the Callier Center for Communication Disorders, Engineering and Computer Science West, Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center, Brain Performance Institute, and two new student housing complexes. Additionally, Dr. Benson has elevated the university's innovative research by expanding its partnership with UT Southwestern Medical Center and opening a 150,000 square foot Texas Instruments Biomedical Engineering and Sciences Building. Under his leadership, UT Dallas has experienced record enrollments, expanded its sports program, and has been recognized as a top value college by The Princeton Review, U.S. News & World Report, and Forbes, enhancing the university's reputation as an educational powerhouse in North Texas.

I thank Dr. Benson for consistently leading with integrity and passion during his more than four decades of guiding and inspiring young minds.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ANTHONY AQUARO

HON. NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, Anthony Aquaro was born in Brooklyn on February 27, 1921, and served our Nation in the United States Navy during World War II from 1942 to 1945 as a first-class boatswain's mate on the USS *Impulse* and the USS *Kingsmill*.

In 1944, while on leave, Aquaro married his high school sweetheart, Gloria. The couple, believed to be Staten Island's longest-married, were together for nearly 80 years.

Aquaro joined the FDNY as a firefighter when he was 31 and served for 26 years with Engine 269 on Union Street in Brooklyn highlighting his commitment to his community. Aquaro later settled in New Dorp in 1965 and had two children. He later became the grandfather of four and the great-grandfather of eight.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Anthony Aquaro for his dedicated service to our community, city, and Nation. His unwavering commitment and bravery have left an indelible mark on all who knew him. We mourn his loss alongside his family and friends, and his legacy will be forever remembered.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANN WAGNER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not present for roll call votes on January 13, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 8 and YEA on Roll Call No. 9.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN HERO BILL ROBERTSON

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our Texas-24 Hometown Hero and Bedford resident, Bill Robertson. Now 100 years old, he has spent decades serving our community and country.

After a year at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, Bill enlisted in the Army Air Force and flew P-51 fighters during World War II. He returned to North Texas after the war, working for Southwestern Engraving Company before teaming up with his father to found Process Engraving Company in Fort Worth. After a successful career, Bill retired in 1996 and handed the reins of his family-run business to his son. Named "Optimist of the Year" in 1988 by the Breakfast Optimist Club of East Fort Worth, Bill has helped feed, educate, and serve Tarrant County residents for 26 years. A man of deep faith, he is also a member of Woodland Heights Baptist Church.

I thank Mr. Robertson for his heart of service and positive vision, as I join the many North Texans wishing him a happy 100th birthday.

REMEMBERING KELLY BLANTON

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and enduring legacy of Dr. Kelly Blanton, an educational visionary who dedicated his career to improving the education of his students and peers.

Born on January 12, 1937, near Savoy, Texas, Dr. Blanton moved west during the dust bowl and was raised in Kern County. Through the Great Depression and World War II, Dr. Blanton lived alongside his six siblings and parents at farm labor camps. While residing at Wasco Labor Camp, they supported the family by picking cotton. Discovering his early passion for education, Dr. Blanton would successfully pursue degrees from Bakersfield College, San Francisco State University, California State University, Fresno, and ultimately a Doctorate from the University of Southern California.

With humble beginnings, Dr. Blanton would commit to ensuring that education remained a transformative force in the lives of young people. Dr. Blanton's career in education began in