

The United States was one of the first countries to recognize independence and fully established diplomatic relations on February 28, 1992. Today, the United States and Azerbaijan are still strategic allies and share common interests in the region and globally.

As the co-chairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, I urge my colleagues to recognize the sacrifices of the Azerbaijani people in their steps towards independence and encourage a recommitment to the democratic values for which many Azerbaijanis sacrificed their lives.

RECOGNIZING LOWER MAKEFIELD CHIEF OF POLICE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR KENNETH D. COLUZZI'S RETIREMENT

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding constituent of my district, Lower Makefield Chief of Police and Emergency Management Coordinator Kenneth D. Coluzzi who retired on December 31, 2024, after a distinguished 48-year career in law enforcement, including 24 years of dedicated and faithful service to the citizens of Lower Makefield, Pennsylvania.

Prior to becoming Chief of Police, Chief Coluzzi began his career as a police officer in Philadelphia. Starting out as an officer in the Transit Unit and moving to the 14th district of Germantown, he quickly rose through the ranks as corporal, detective, and then detective sergeant. Around this time, Chief Coluzzi was assigned to work with the elite Homicide Unit showing his dedication to his community and commitment to justice. Chief Coluzzi transferred to the Special Investigative Unit and Fugitive Squad and prior to leaving the Philadelphia Police Department, he went back to the Homicide Unit as their Commander. Throughout his 22 years serving the Philadelphia community, he was a well-known presence in the media, drawing attention to various high-profile investigations.

Chief Coluzzi has had extensive police training including attending the Northwestern University School of Staff and Command and the Pennsylvania State University Police Executive Management Program. The Chief has a bachelor's degree in business communications from Chestnut Hill College and holds a master's degree in business administration with a public administration concentration.

In 2000, Chief Coluzzi became the Chief of Police for the Lower Makefield Police Department in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Under his leadership, the Lower Makefield Police Department was transformed. Chief Coluzzi brought new initiatives to the community including introducing the use of Narcan to police officers and advocating for all police agencies in Bucks County to use Naloxone.

After a dedicated career to law enforcement, Chief Coluzzi plans to spend time with his wife Karen, eight children and his thirteen grandchildren. Retirement for Chief Coluzzi means traveling and spending time fishing at the Jersey Shore.

I wish to congratulate Kenneth on his almost five decades of service to the citizens of

Bucks and Philadelphia Counties and on his well-deserved retirement from the Lower Makefield Police Department.

RECOGNIZING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY GALA HELD IN HONOR OF THE EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN APOSTOLOS OF NEW JERSEY

HON. FRANK PALLONE, Jr.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey as he is honored for his profound devotion to the Greek Orthodox Church and to the Greek American Community. I join the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey as they commemorate the ordination of His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos to the Holy Episcopacy. It is my privilege to join in celebration during the Metropolitan 10th Anniversary Gala, His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey is truly deserving of this body's recognition.

Metropolitan Apostolos began his service to the Greek Orthodox church on July 28, 1996, when he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood and received the Offikion of Archimandrite by Metropolitan Apostolos of Rhodes. In March of 2000, he continued his theological education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he was granted the degree of Master of Divinity. To expand his studies and service globally, he attended Boston University School of Theology. His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston assigned Archimandrite Apostolos as the visiting priest at the Annunciation Church in Brockton, Massachusetts.

Archimandrite Apostolos went on to serve many others throughout the country, including the historic parish of St. George in Southbridge, Massachusetts, the Saints Anargyroi parish of Marlborough, Massachusetts, Metropolis of San Francisco and more. Notably, Archimandrite Apostolos Koufallakis was granted the title of honorary president during his service as the Dean of the historic Cathedral of St. Demetrios in Astoria by the president and members of Society of Patmos. Metropolitan Apostolos was also recognized for his devotion to the community during the 2008 Greek Independence Day Celebrations by the President of the Borough of Queens, New York. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America appointed Archimandrite Apostolos Koufallakis as the director of the Archdiocesan Hellenic Cultural Center.

On July 24, 2023, His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos upon the recommendation of His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was unanimously elected by the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the New Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey. His leadership is currently responsible for parishes in New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Delaware.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in congratulating Metropolitan Apostolos on another honorable year of his enthronement. The continued efforts to honor the Hellenic heritage are truly admirable.

ILLEGITIMATE COURT COUNTERACTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. LATEEFAH SIMON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Ms. SIMON. Mr. Speaker, Congress should support an impartial international criminal justice system to promote accountability and justice around the world. Imposing mandatory sanctions and visa restrictions on foreign individuals interacting with International Criminal Court prosecutors is a broad, dangerous approach, which is why I oppose this bill.

International law is effective only when it applies to actors and states regardless of who they are. Weakening and discrediting investigations into allegations of war crimes and human rights violations undermines peaceful tools of resolving and preventing conflicts.

Taking a blanket approach as proposed in this bill could implicate any foreign individual who interacts with the ICC and may even punish people like cafeteria workers and janitors for simply doing their jobs. Undermining the rule of law and freedom of speech as this bill proposes will threaten international justice and accountability. For those reasons, I oppose the bill.

HONORING DR. ROZZANA VERDER-ALIGA UPON HER RETIREMENT

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Rozzana Verder-Aliga, EDD, LMFT, on the occasion of her retirement. Dr. Verder-Aliga's unwavering commitment to our community and her remarkable contributions to Vallejo, Solano County, and beyond have been invaluable to our community.

For nearly three decades, Dr. Verder-Aliga has served with distinction as a community organizer, educator, mental health professional, and public servant. A role model for aspiring leaders, especially young women and girls, she has exemplified the values of representation, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Her dedication to serving children, seniors, veterans, and families in need has been the cornerstone of her work.

Dr. Verder-Aliga made history as the first Filipino American woman elected to public office in Vallejo and Solano County. She began her public service career on the Vallejo School Board in 1993, where she served three terms as Board President during her 12-year tenure. She later served on the Solano County Board of Education Area 7, for six years, including a term as Board President. In 2013, she was elected to the Vallejo City Council, where she served for 11 years, earning the distinction of being the longest-serving Vice Mayor in Vallejo's history.

Born in Manila, Philippines, Dr. Verder-Aliga immigrated to the United States in 1981, bringing with her a passion for service and a vision for a better future. She and her husband, Nestor Aliga, a retired U.S. Marine Corps and Army Colonel, raised three sons,

all of whom graduated from California public universities. The Aligas recently welcomed their first grandchild, Nestor III.

As a mental health professional, Dr. Verder-Aliga dedicated 28 years to Solano County Behavioral Health, providing critical services to children, seniors, veterans, and families. It is a pleasure to celebrate Dr. Rozzana Verder-Aliga as a trailblazing leader, dedicated public servant, and champion of equity and empowerment. On behalf of the constituents of California's 8th Congressional District, I wish Dr. Verder-Aliga best wishes in her well-earned retirement and extend my sincere gratitude for her many years of service to the community.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE GINA KAY
CALVERT

HON. MORGAN MCGARVEY

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Judge Gina Kay Calvert in recognition of her outstanding career in law and her significant contributions to the legal system of Kentucky.

Judge Calvert's impressive career began with twenty years of practice, where she gained experience as a prosecutor, defense attorney, civil litigator, and family court attorney. Her extensive background in the legal field, coupled with her unwavering dedication to justice, paved the way for her election to the Jefferson District Court Bench in 2010, where she was re-elected in 2014. As Juvenile Court Judge, Judge Calvert served with distinction, also stepping in as a substitute judge for Family Court, Circuit Court, and Circuit Drug Court.

As an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, Judge Calvert prosecuted some of the most sensitive and important cases, including physical and sexual crimes against children and felony domestic violence. Her 17 years of experience in Family Court, where she represented abused and neglected children, indigent parents, and handled divorce, custody, paternity, and adoption cases, has made her a respected voice in family law. Judge Calvert's role as a certified Family Court Mediator and Parenting Coordinator has further solidified her reputation as a compassionate and highly skilled legal professional.

In addition to her service on the bench, Judge Calvert is actively involved in organizations such as the Kosair Charities Advisory Council, the FACE IT movement to end child abuse, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Her commitment to advancing the welfare of children and families is evident in both her professional and personal endeavors.

Judge Calvert has earned the highest praise and endorsement from her peers, with more than 90 percent of attorneys rating her as highly qualified or qualified in the 2016 Louisville Bar Association candidate poll.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Calvert's lifelong dedication to justice, children's advocacy, and the families of Kentucky has made a lasting impact. I express my deepest appreciation for her exemplary service and tireless commitment to ensuring justice for all.

ILLICIT NICOTINE POUCHES FROM
CHINA

HON. DON BACON

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an increasingly alarming problem facing America's public health, which is the flow of unregulated illicit nicotine pouch products. These illicit products, most of which are coming from China, avoid FDA regulation, confusing adult consumers seeking safer alternatives and retailers, and muddying the waters for manufacturers that are following the rules.

While enforcement action has largely focused on e-cigarettes, the Food and Drug Administration has paid little attention to illicit Chinese nicotine pouches and enforcing the rules—especially when the foreign manufacturer failed to apply for FDA authorization.

Congress established the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products to regulate the tobacco and nicotine market. But the FDA has failed to determine which nicotine pouch products should remain available or be removed, making it difficult for retailers and consumers to know what to do.

The FDA must follow the science. By doing so, the FDA will authorize nicotine pouch products that are appropriate for the protection of public health and stem the flow of illicit products coming in from China.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT
YUVAL SHOHAM

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, we remember Staff Sergeant Yuval Shoham who was tragically killed while defending his beloved Israel. Yuval, a brave member of the 9th Battalion of the 401st Brigade of the Israeli Defense Forces was only 22 years old.

Yuval was the beloved son of Oshrat and Effie Shoham, former members of Riverdale's SAR Academy community, where Yuval was part of the third-grade class during the 2010–2011 school year.

Yuval will be remembered not only as a soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice but also as the child who so eagerly learned and grew.

He will be sorely missed, and may we honor his courage by continuing to stand in support of community and the values that he held dear.

IN MEMORY OF CHUCK LARSEN

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Midlands of South Carolina is humbled to remember President Chuck Larsen of the

Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce. With his leadership, the Chamber has been so effective promoting small businesses for creating jobs and opportunities, now led by President Kerry Powers.

I especially appreciate his achievements as a member of the Chamber evolving from the Irmo Business and Professional Association. In 2001, I was grateful to be selected as the first Irmo Chamber Ambassador of the Year with my predecessor Armed Services Committee Chairman Floyd Spence attending.

Celebrating the life of Chuck Larsen, services were conducted by Reverend Andrew Davis of the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church at Dunbar Funeral Home of Irmo with a thoughtful eulogy by Don Gilbert of Chapin and a musical remembrance of "Danny Boy" by Ted Lightle.

The program of the services featured an inspiring obituary,

"Charles "Chuck" Larsen, Sr., 96, passed away January 5, 2024. Chuck was born in 1928 in Pensacola, Florida to Karl and Alma Bishop Larsen.

At an early age, Chuck had a radio show where he performed, sang, and tap danced. This was the start of his lifetime love of music and dance. In Chuck's early twenties, in the big band era, he started the Chuck Larsen Band in Pensacola, Florida which toured in the west Florida area.

Chuck attended Pensacola Junior College and Furman University before serving in the Navy and was an Air Force veteran of the Korean War.

Chuck had a varied career in business and politics working for Monsanto in South Carolina and various politicians including South Carolina senators and governors. He received numerous awards and commendations from the South Carolina Senate and House of Representatives for his service to the state including the South Carolina Order of the Palmetto.

Chuck was instrumental in the formation of the Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce and worked with the Chamber for over 20 years. Chuck served as the President and Executive Director of the Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce and retired at the age of 80. Chuck was well known in Irmo through his work with the Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce, Okra Strut Festival, and Miss Irmo pageants. Chuck was commonly known as "Mr. Irmo." He picked this up due to his active support of the Chamber as well as all the activities in Irmo.

Chuck was preceded in death by his wife of 46 years Merlyne "Mert" Thornton Larsen; daughter-in-law Sharon Renee Baker Larsen; and great-grandson Kage Archer Larsen. He is survived by sons Charles Lars Larsen, Jr. (Jamie) and James Karl Larsen; grandchildren Karl (Heather), Kevin (Kristin), Jessica Mitchum (Chase), Kyle (Courtney) and Justin (Maggie); and great-grandchildren June Mitchum and Rheese Larsen.

A viewing will be held from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 pm on Thursday, January 9 at Dunbar Funeral Home in Irmo, South Carolina. A funeral service will be held Friday, January 10, 2025 at 2 p.m. at the Dunbar Funeral Home Dutch Fork Chapel in Imo, South Carolina, 7600 Woodrow Street.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Tunnel to Towers Foundation or the local Irmo based charity of your choice."