

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING CONGRESSIONAL
AWARD WINNER CAROLINA ISA-
BELLE CRUZ MARTORELL

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Carolina Cruz Martorell, an exceptional young woman from San Juan, Puerto Rico, whose accomplishments stand as a testament to the values of service, initiative, and perseverance. Carolina has been awarded the Bronze Medal by the Congressional Award Program, one of the highest civilian honors conferred by the United States Congress to youth who demonstrate exemplary commitment to personal development and community engagement.

In addition to the Bronze Medal, Carolina has earned the Congressional Award's Bronze, Silver, and Gold Certificates, as well as recognition as a STEM Star, distinguishing her as a leader in both academic excellence and service to others. Through countless hours dedicated to volunteer work, physical fitness, and the pursuit of personal goals, Carolina has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to bettering herself and the world around her.

Her service initiatives have had a tangible and meaningful impact on her community, particularly in advancing educational opportunities for younger students and promoting science and technology outreach in underserved areas. Whether through mentoring, community programming, or advocacy, Carolina embodies the spirit of civic engagement and the boundless potential of Puerto Rico's youth.

Mr. Speaker, Carolina is a role model, not only for her peers in Puerto Rico, but for young people across the Nation. Her achievements are a source of pride for our island and an inspiration for all who believe in the power of service and personal growth. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Carolina Cruz Martorell on this well-deserved recognition and in wishing her continued success in all her future endeavors.

CELEBRATING CONGRESSIONAL
AWARD WINNER ASHLEY BARLOW

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ashley Barlow, an extraordinary

young woman from Dorado, Puerto Rico, who has earned the prestigious Gold Medal from the Congressional Award Program. Ashley's achievements in athletics, community service, personal development, and cultural exploration are a testament to her dedication, resilience, and compassion.

Ashley devoted countless hours teaching children to swim and promoting water safety. She also participated in humanitarian efforts—traveling to West Virginia to build wheelchair ramps and repair homes, and later to Colombia to help construct a school for underserved children. Her passion for service is evident both locally and abroad.

As a competitive swimmer, Ashley excelled on both her club and varsity teams. She committed herself not only to physical training but also to holistic wellness, taking specialized nutrition courses and applying her knowledge to enhance her performance and recovery.

Her commitment to growth extends beyond athletics. During her "Virtual Gold Medal Expedition," Ashley explored diverse cultures through educational tours and interviews with locals in Australia. These experiences broadened her global perspective and deepened her appreciation for different communities.

Ashley Barlow's impressive achievements and character embody the spirit of the Congressional Award. She represents the best of our youth—committed to bettering herself and the world around her. It is with great pride that I honor Ashley as a 2025 Gold Medalist.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ashley Barlow on her remarkable accomplishments and in wishing her continued success in all her future endeavors.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF ALL
THE SOLDIERS OF PUERTO RICO
ON MEMORIAL DAY

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep respect and reverence to honor the memory of all Puerto Rican soldiers who have fallen in combat while serving under the flag of the United States of America. These brave men and women, generation after generation, answered the call of duty and gave the ultimate sacrifice—their lives—in defense of the ideals of liberty, justice, and democracy.

Since World War I, following the enactment of the Jones-Shafroth Act in 1917—which granted U.S. citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico—our island has sent forth its sons and daughters with a steadfast commitment to defend this Nation and its most fundamental principles.

During World War II, approximately 65,000 Puerto Ricans served in various capacities, including combat and support roles, across multiple theaters of war. In the Korean War, the legacy of the heroic 65th Infantry Regiment—known as the "Borinqueneers"—was forever solidified. This segregated unit, composed primarily of Puerto Rican soldiers, met the perils of combat with exceptional valor.

Because of their courage and determination, the "Borinqueneers" received numerous commendations for their service during the Korean War, including two Korean Presidential Unit Citations, 2,771 Purple Heart Medals, 606 Bronze Stars, 256 Silver Stars, nine Distinguished Service Crosses, and the Medal of Honor. In 2014, this Honorable Chamber awarded them the Congressional Gold Medal—one of the Nation's highest civilian honors.

In the Vietnam War, approximately 48,000 Puerto Ricans served, with over 455 making the ultimate sacrifice. Puerto Rican service members have continued to serve honorably in conflicts such as the Gulf War, operations in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and in various humanitarian and peacekeeping missions globally. These individuals were not only soldiers; they were fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, students, farmers, laborers, professionals, and dreamers. Each of them carried with them the cultural identity and dignity of our people. Their lives and sacrifices are living proof that the greatness of a Nation is also measured by the courage and commitment of those who defend it—regardless of their place of birth or the language they speak.

This coming Monday, May 26, 2025, we will commemorate Memorial Day under the theme: "Past, Present, and Future—Honor, Sacrifice, and Legacy." These words embody the spirit of this solemn day and the shared responsibility we all bear to preserve the memory of our heroes, to recognize their enduring impact on our institutions, and to sow the seeds of their legacy in future generations.

Today, I enter into the RECORD the eternal gratitude of the people of Puerto Rico. Every flag flown at half-staff, every family photo placed with reverence on a shelf, every name etched in stone is a solemn pledge that we will never forget their service, their sacrifice, or their profound love of country.

May the United States Congress, and our grateful Nation, forever honor the memory of Puerto Rican soldiers who have fallen in battle. May their legacy continue to guide us in the ongoing pursuit of a more just, more free, and more inclusive society—one for which they gave their lives.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.