

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING MERCEDES ANDERSON-BRANDO

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Mercedes Anderson-Brando has made through her volunteerism at Gulf Highlands Elementary School. Mercedes supports the school in so many ways. She is at every School Advisory Council (SAC) meeting, supports all extra-curricular events, and consistently pitches in whenever needed. The students know her and look forward to seeing her around campus.

It is clear Mercedes Anderson-Brando has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service. May we all strive to serve our communities with the same dedication and humility.

HONORING SUKI KAHAAULELIO

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Suki Kahaulelio for his lifelong contributions to the preservation of Hawaiian culture and his decades of service as a mentor, teacher, and leader in our Sonoma County community.

Born on June 4, 1957, in Oahu, Hawaii, Mr. Kahaulelio graduated from Kahuku High School in 1975. Shortly after, he moved to California to attend Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), becoming part of the first wave of Polynesian student-athletes recruited to the school. Mr. Kahaulelio was a standout on the 1977–78 State Championship football team, and his success helped pave the way for other Polynesian student-athletes in our region, including Les Goeas, Tom Ako, and Chauncey Ako to thrive in our region. Though many expected him to return to the Islands after graduation, Mr. Kahaulelio chose instead to build a life, raise a family, and establish a vibrant Polynesian community here in our Sonoma County.

Following his time as a student-athlete, Mr. Kahaulelio remained deeply committed to community building, athletics, and cultural preservation. He was a key figure in the development of the Santa Rosa Rugby Club, helping the team win two National Championships. Mr. Kahaulelio later coached for the Rohnert Park Warriors youth football team, here he mentored young athletes and instilled in them the values of humility, teamwork, and service.

For 46 years, Mr. Kahaulelio served as a kumu (teacher), mental, and Hawaiian cultural bearer. His life's work was rooted in perpetuating core Hawaiian principles such as

kuleana (responsibility), malama 'āina (care for the land), and pono (righteousness). Grounded in the wisdom of his kūpuna (ancestors), Mr. Kahaulelio's teachings emphasized intergenerational learning, cultural sovereignty, and healing through connection. His lifelong commitment to teaching traditional Hawaiian values, mentoring youth, and organizing cultural events helped preserve Hawaiian identity across generations. By creating spaces for language, ceremony, and shared history, Mr. Kahaulelio fostered a sense of pride and belonging among the Hawaiian diaspora and helped raise broader awareness of Hawaiian culture in our Sonoma County community.

While attending SRJC, Mr. Kahaulelio met his first wife, Val, with whom he had two children, Cheylyn and Jacob. He later married Toni Guanella, who passed away in 2018, and they had one son together, Dino. Mr. Kahaulelio passed away on January 14, 2021, due to a stroke. His impact continues to resonate in the lives of those he touched, and his legacy will carry forward through the inaugural Suki Kahaulelio Memorial Golf Tournament, taking place on May 31, 2025, in Rohnert Park. Proceeds from the event will support student-athletes and help preserve Hawaiian culture, continuing Mr. Kahaulelio's life work.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Suki Kahaulelio for his dedicated service to our community. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor his legacy here today.

RECOGNIZING ARTHUR LANE

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Arthur Lane for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Arthur has overcome many challenges along his journey to success, demonstrating perseverance at every step. Students who strive to make the most of their education, like Arthur, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Arthur's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Three Creeks K–8 and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Arthur Lane on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF MR. WILLIAM MURRAY LYLES, III

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the legacy of Mr. William Murray Lyles, III, an ex-

traordinary father, husband, community leader, and philanthropist.

Born in Ohio, to his parents Elizabeth and William Murray Lyles, II, Mr. Lyles grew up in Avenal, California. As a teenager Bill began working with construction crews and was mentored by his uncles Mac and Larry Lyles, who had very successful construction careers. He then went on to attend Purdue University earning a degree in Civil Engineering and later served our country for two years in the Navy. From an early age Bill decided he would continue the legacy of his parents' pipeline business W.M. Lyles Co. established in 1945.

In the 1970's inflation was an obstacle for many businesses; however, Bill understood business cycles, his solution diversification. The first effort of diversification began in the multifamily arena with Jerome Kozlowski. Fifty years later the partnership between these families remains as strong as ever. Additionally, with the support from Bill's brother Gerald, they included development, manufacturing, and agriculture. Today the family business continues to thrive.

Bill wrote a memoir "The Joy of Building" which outlines the successes and failures of his work to expand economic opportunity and promote the Arts. He coined the term the "Apalachian West" to describe the poverty he saw in Fresno in the 1980's. He believed in the theory that the rising tide would lift all. He sought to promote upward mobility especially for minorities with his work at the Chamber of Commerce, The Private Industry Council, The Economic Development Commission, Fresno Boys and Girls Club, San Joaquin College of Law, Fresno City College, and Fresno State.

As a strong patron of the Arts, he was a member of the Purdue Glee Club. He sang for the newly coronated Queen Elizabeth and Maime Eisenhower. Many knew that he would often break out into song. For decades, he attended and supported performances of the Fresno Philharmonic, Fresno Opera, and Good Company Players. He was also a strong supporter of Channel 18, The Fresno Met, and the Fresno Art Museum.

As a longtime member of East Fresno Rotary, he lived the Four Way Test. In later years he found great enjoyment from the Owls. Bill accrued numerous accolades including, among others, an honorary doctorate from Fresno State, Fresno Chamber of Commerce's Leon S. Peters' Award, Purdue Distinguished Engineering Alumni, and Outstanding Philanthropist Award.

Bill leaves behind his beloved wife Anne H. Lyles, whom he met during his freshman year of high school in El Paso and reconnected with later in life. Anne and Bill were married for 36 years. Together they enjoyed the simple pleasures of life and the grand adventures, they traveled the world, regularly attended church, antique collecting, and meals with loved ones. Their relationship showcased the power of enduring love and commitment. Bill is also survived by his sister Marybeth Seay (Lester), brother Gerald Lyles (Nanette), son Will Lyles (Tami), daughters Annarie Lyles

• 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.

(Andy Dobson), and Adriana Hayward (Bill), step daughters Pam Peiffer (Matt) and Trisha Duval (Pat), his first wife Valera Whitford Lyles, mother of Will, Annarie, and Adriana, and grandchildren Allegra, Alistair, Delphinia Kelsey, Tatiana, Venezia, Chloe (Nick), Lauren, William and Hannah.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my esteemed colleagues to join me in honoring the legacy of William "Bill" Murray Lyles, III. He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

RECOGNIZING BRITTAMARIE
GRIFFIN

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brittamarie Griffin for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Brittamarie has overcome many challenges along her journey to success, demonstrating perseverance at every step. Students who strive to make the most of their education, like Brittamarie, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Brittamarie's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Warren Tech North and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Brittamarie Griffin on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

RECOGNIZING MIKA ROTUNDA

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Mika Rotunda has made through her work with Habitat Tampa Bay Gulfside. Born and raised in Brooksville, Mika Rotunda is a dynamic professional with a background in media and real estate. With years of experience in broadcasting and content creation, Mika has developed a unique ability to connect with her audience, community and customers. Her passion for people and the desire to empower others, translates seamlessly into her real estate career. Combining her media expertise and real estate knowledge, Mika has broad a unique perspective to the Habitat Board, which she was voted onto in 2024. Habitat Tampa Bay Gulfside has been working to create lasting relationships in Hernando County. Mika has played a key role in making introductions and working alongside our Hernando Executive Director to provide information and dispel myths about the Habitat mission. Mika has used her social media platform of over 100k followers to help spread Habitat's mission and promote the Habitat program to Hernando County individuals and families. Mika has worked with Habitat's external relations team to create social media videos to promote major events and invite people to apply to the Habitat program. Habitat will cele-

brate the completion of its first home in Hernando this June. When that happens, Mika will be one of the first in line to congratulate the new homeowner and welcome them to the area.

It is clear Mika Rotunda has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service. May we all strive to serve our communities with the same dedication and humility.

HONORING RIO VISTA CARING AC-
TIONS REACHING EVERYONE
(CARE)

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rio Vista Caring Actions Reaching Everyone (CARE) as the organization celebrates 40 years of service to the Delta community. Since 1985, CARE has provided critical mental health and family support services to children, families, and individuals across Rio Vista and other rural communities in our district.

Rio Vista CARE was founded as a grass-roots effort in response to a growing need for professional, low-cost mental health care in the region. Under the leadership of founding Executive Director Araminta Blackwelder, the organization grew into a trusted service provider, offering counseling, in-home visitation, mentoring, and crisis intervention. For over 26 years, Ms. Blackwelder guided CARE through economic challenges and expansion efforts, ensuring it remained a lifeline for families in need. In 2011, she passed the reins to Paul Shane, a seasoned nonprofit leader, and today the organization continues to thrive under the leadership of Executive Director Adriana Bejarano.

In 1995, CARE established the CARE Family Resource Center, expanding its ability to offer wraparound support. The center helps individuals and families access health insurance enrollment, translation services, assistance with unemployment, and connections to local resources. In 2002, CARE launched a home-visiting program to serve families in isolated rural areas. Today, the organization continues to offer school-based counseling from kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as individual and family therapy, grief counseling, support groups, crisis services, and a teen center.

Over the last four decades, CARE has served more than 18,000 children and family units. Seventy percent of its current clients are children. For many families, CARE has become an enduring presence, with parents who once sought help at CARE as children returning to the clinic with their own children, showing how deeply woven CARE is into the fabric of the community.

Rio Vista CARE remains the Delta region's only low-cost professional counseling and family resource center. Its services are provided regardless of a client's ability to pay, ensuring accessibility for those who need it most. CARE's success over the past 40 years reflects the power of community-based service, strong leadership, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of others.

Mr. Speaker, Rio Vista CARE has stood by our community for four decades, helping families through their most difficult moments and building pathways to resilience and hope. It is fitting and proper that we recognize their invaluable contributions here today.

HONORING PETE VOGT FOR HIS
CONTRIBUTIONS TO CENTRAL
FLORIDA

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, born on August 18, 1944, in Wauchula, Florida, to Martha Pearle Mathis and George A. Vogt, Pete Vogt was a true Florida native. His deep-rooted connection to the state's landscapes was deeply influenced by his grandmother, Annabel Mathis, whose parents owned land in rural southwest Florida. Although his father's Air Force career led the family to move extensively around the U.S. during his youth, Pete always knew his roots were firmly planted among the southern palmetto hammocks and swamps.

Pete was back in Florida for his high school years at Oak Ridge High School. He often commented that the opportunity to attend a brand-new high school without established cliques and traditions made forming a wide range of friendships easier and enriched his high school experience. One of these friends, Linda Osborne, would become his wife.

Pete attended the University of South Florida, majoring in economics and developing a lifelong interest in politics, especially civil rights. Linda followed him to USF, and they married on August 21, 1965, while still in college. Pete graduated in 1966 and immediately joined the U.S. Army, as he believed military service was his responsibility as an American citizen. After boot camp, he was accepted into the Army's Officer Candidate School, and upon graduation was commissioned as a second lieutenant. To his delight, he was stationed in Germany. Once Linda graduated from USF, she was able to join him, and they enjoyed traveling in Europe. Their son, Eric, was born in Germany in 1968.

Once he had fulfilled his obligation to the Army, Pete and Linda returned to Orlando. Pete tried on a handful of jobs before finding that joining George A. Vogt Realty, his father's firm in Belle Isle, was the right fit. Pete excelled in building client relationships, sharing an endless supply of jokes, and maintaining connections with past clients. He joined the Orlando Regional Realtors Association and served on the board from 1970 until 2010.

Pete became involved in Democratic Party politics and worked on scores of local, state, and national campaigns over the years. He was deeply committed to civic engagement and women's and minority rights. His civic and political activities were extensive. A short list of boards on which Pete served includes the Mennello Museum of American Art, Guardian Care Nursing Home, Tiger Bay Club, Orange Audubon Society, and the First Unitarian Church of Orlando.

An intellectual at his core, Pete was insatiably curious, and each new interest led him to devour multiple books on the subject. Pete considered any week incomplete without a