

Excellence Partner, Ariana has played a vital role in developing the leadership capacity of Members and teams here in the U.S. House of Representatives. Her guidance has helped create cultures grounded in authenticity, resilience, and service.

With over 25 years of experience in management, cross-cultural education, and international development, Ariana has helped countless individuals and organizations communicate more effectively, lead more intentionally, and bring clarity and inclusivity to their missions. Her passion for empowering others is matched only by her skill in creating environments where diverse perspectives are not only welcomed but celebrated.

Ms. Leon's background includes a Master's in International Affairs, certification as a Co-Active Professional Coach, and recognition from the International Coaching Federation. But beyond her impressive credentials, it is her human touch, her ability to truly listen, connect, and guide, that sets her apart.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Ariana Leon for her service as a leadership coach. Her work has made a lasting impact on me and the people she has coached and the institutions she has strengthened, including in this very Congress. I thank Ariana, for reminding us that leadership is about presence, coinage, and compassion.

She inspires all who strive to lead with compassion and purpose. From the bottom of my heart, I thank her.

RECOGNIZING THE ZETA RHO OMEGA CHAPTER OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize the Zeta Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA) on its 70th Anniversary.

Founded on April 16, 1955, the Zeta Rho Omega chapter is the oldest and largest chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in Broward County. The chartering of the Fort Lauderdale chapter began with the vision of Willard Lamar and 14 young women. This aspiring group organized for approximately one year, locating members and completing the necessary requirements to become an established chapter.

Charter Members included: Gladys Cohen, Sylvia Epps, Jean Everett, Parthenia Hamm, Virginia Hamm, Hazel Hankerson, Daphne Harrison, Cecelia Hayes, Eula Mosby, Betty Smith, Millicent Sworn, Gloria Talbot, Albertha Latimer, and Willard Lamar, the first chapter president.

Zeta Rho Omega Chapter continues to be an active and integral part of the Ft. Lauderdale community and has received many awards and recognitions for its youth leadership programs, health fairs, and volunteer services, voter registration drives, and scholarships. Zeta Rho Omega Chapter will always strive to exhibit excellence in community service by providing "Service to all Mankind."

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is an international service organization founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington,

D.C. in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-letter organization established by African American college-educated women, and service and sisterhood have been the cornerstone of AKA since its founding.

Alpha Kappa Alpha is comprised of more than 360,000 initiated members in graduate and undergraduate chapters located in 12 nations and territories including the United States, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Germany, Japan, Liberia, Nigeria, South Korea, South Africa and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Led by International President & CEO Danette Anthony Reed of Dallas, Texas, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, often is hailed as "America's premier Greek-lettered organization for African American women."

HONORING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 250th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration, or what we call the Meck Dec, that took place on May 20, 2025.

A pivotal moment in the history of both the United States and North Carolina, when brave North Carolinians—united by their common pursuit of freedom—became the very first Americans to declare independence from the British. The Mecklenburg Declaration is the earliest known document to formally declare independence and paved the way for the establishment of the United States and our great democracy. Signed on May 20, 1775, the Mecklenburg Declaration marked one of North Carolina's most consequential actions during the Revolutionary period.

The history of the Mecklenburg Declaration not only prompted independence for our entire nation but showed the passion of the citizens of our state. This passion led British Commander General Cornwallis to describe Charlotte as "a hornet's nest of rebellion." After American victories at the battles of Lexington and Concord, Mecklenburg delegates gathered to draft the document severing ties with the British Crown. In the same spirit, our community continues to stand for liberty, justice and freedom.

Sadly, all that has survived are copies based on oral recollections from some of the original delegates after an 1800 fire. Despite the physical paper's destruction, our great state commemorates this on our flag and through celebrations every year.

I am proud of our heritage and our forefathers' stand for freedom I will always strive to represent our state with the same passion as those leaders so long ago.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the 250th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration that took place on May 20, to honor the Mecklenburg Declaration and its historical anniversary for both the United States and the great state of North Carolina.

I welcome all of my colleagues to join us in celebration of 250 years of freedom, thanks to the great North Carolinians who risked it all.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF THE VISALIA RAWHIDE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of the Visalia Rawhide in commemoration of their 80th Professional Minor League Season.

The historical heritage of baseball in Visalia begins in the early days of 1873. The newly organized Empire Club represented Visalia and played their first baseball game against Bakersfield's team, The Two Orphans.

This historic game was played on the school playground of Visalia Normal School located at Willis and Acequia Streets, which was enriched with the sounds of Bakerfield's brass band to sweeten the occasion. Although the first game ended in the Empire Club's first loss, the comradery of baseball sparked enthusiasm within the City of Visalia, which led them to continue the sport for more than 100 years after.

The fever of baseball had spread like wildfire by 1899 which led to the San Joaquin Valley Baseball League being formed. It was operated independently and contained city group members such as Visalia, Bakersfield, Hanford, Merced, Selma, Porterville and Tulare. The City of Fresno joined in 1910, but the baseball league was dismembered by 1911 to become individual minor league teams.

The Visalia Empire Club had gone through a time of transition from a Class D Minor League Baseball Team to Class C by 1946. Eventually the change from Class C to Class A was instituted by 1975, Class A to Class A-Advanced by 1990 and eventually entered the Single-A class in 2021.

The minor league baseball team had gone through nine name changes, aligning with their major league affiliations. By 2009, the team had been rebranded as the Visalia Rawhide and would maintain this name until present day. Playing under the Major League affiliate, the Arizona Diamondbacks, the Visalia Rawhide name had quickly become popular throughout the community. It is believed to have secured the professional baseball team's home in Visalia, California where they had played their games at Valley Strong Ballpark since inception in 1946.

Being the only professional sports team in Tulare and King's County, Visalia Rawhide paid tribute to the vast agricultural industry in the area. The decision to elect a cow as the official team mascot created the fan favorite cheer that is symbolized with the glorious ringing of a cowbell.

HONORING THE ROTARY CLUB OF LAKEPORT, CALIFORNIA

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 Rotary Club of Lakeport and congratulate them on their centennial celebrations. For one hundred years, the club has exemplified the Rotary motto of

"Service Above Self," carrying out thousands of local and international service projects and strengthening our Lakeport community and beyond.

The Rotary Club of Lakeport was founded in 1925 after the Oakland Rotary Club sponsored its creation. Today, the club stands as one of more than 46,000 Rotary Clubs worldwide, with Rotary International encompassing over 1.2 million members of all races, colors, and creeds. The Lakeport club is composed of a diverse membership that includes business owners, religious leaders, attorneys, judges, educators, and other community leaders. The club also sponsored the creation of the Clearlake and Kelseyville Sunrise Rotary Clubs, showcasing its commitment to the development of our Lake County community.

Over the years, the club has made a lasting impact in our region through numerous initiatives. Its annual community Easter Egg Hunt, first held in 1925, remains their longest-standing event and will mark its 99th occurrence this year. Members also helped construct the bleachers for Clear Lake High School's football stadium, enhanced amenities at Westside Community Park, and restored the historic Lakeport Curfew Bell, which now stands in the newly completed Xabatin Lakeside Park. The club has also completed countless beautification projects in our area and helped found the Lake Area Rotary Club Association (LARCA), which provides vital disaster relief to victims of wildfires and other natural disasters in our Lake County.

The club has also generously supported healthcare institutions. It has donated medical equipment, refrigeration units and TV's to Lakeside Community Hospital and created a Hospice Memory Garden in honor of those who have passed. Their commitment to service includes the creation of a community garden, a medical equipment Lending Library, and the construction of restrooms and showers at the Lake Berryessa Boy Scout Camp. The club has also funded playgrounds for our local Safe House and a teen parenting facility and has maintained the Pearl Harbor Mast to honor the many veterans in our community.

Beyond local work, the Rotary Club of Lakeport has made notable contributions to international causes. Members have hosted numerous foreign exchange students and spearheaded projects across the globe, which include delivering clean water, constructing playgrounds and providing medical services to those in need. They have raised thousands of dollars to support Rotary International's mission to eradicate polio, with members even traveling village to village across the African continent to administer vaccines. Additionally, the club has shipped 100 hospital beds to Haiti, sent two tons of gardening tools to various countries, and supported humanitarian efforts in South Korea through the Lakeport Friendship Center. The club also formed a sister club in Loreto, Mexico, where it has helped build a children's playground, construct a Red Cross building, and have donated an ambulance to the area. Members have also participated in RotoPlast, offering cleft palate surgeries, and supported school infrastructure projects in Mexican orphanages.

Mr. Speaker, the Rotary Club of Lakeport's century of service is a powerful example of community dedication, international outreach, and compassion in action. It is fitting and proper that we recognize and honor their 100th anniversary here today.

RECOGNIZING PATRICIA FURLONG

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 Ms. Patricia Furlong has made to our community through her volunteerism with the Pregnancy & Family Life Center. Ms. Furlong is part of a team of selfless and dedicated women who have worked at the Center in Inverness for several years. Their roles include working each week in the food pantry and clothing room. Last year, 472 clients were served, and more than 65,000 pounds of food was distributed. These critical volunteers also ensure families receive essential items for their infants and young children to include: formula, diapers, pull ups, baby wipes and wash, as well as age specific clothing. In 2024, more than 44,000 diapers and 9,500 items of clothing were distributed. These volunteers have a 'can do' attitude no matter how large the challenge.

They also have tremendous teamwork. They sort through all donations, retain those appropriate for a pregnancy center and then share other serviceable items with community partners. Ms. Furlong also visits the Center each weekend when the facility is closed to check the donation box and bring donated items inside to ensure they reach the intended recipients. When volunteers are united in an important mission, it naturally fosters camaraderie which is great for anyone who works or volunteers at the Center. All of these women maintain a loving demeanor and greet each client with a warm smile and conversation (and sometimes a hug). The Center's clients feel welcomed and cared for because of the lived values of love, respect, compassion, and family centeredness that is regularly displayed by these dedicated volunteers. The benefit to the community is great and the impact far reaching.

It is clear that Patricia Furlong 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.

RECOGNIZING ALYSSA SAYERS

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

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

Alyssa 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 Alyssa, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Alyssa'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 Alyssa Sayers on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JAMES E. "RED WARRIOR" RAWLINGS, R. PH., MPH

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with the heaviest of hearts that I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of an outstanding community leader and my dear friend, James E. "Red Warrior" Rawlings, who we lost this week. Over the course of his life, Jim was many things to many people, but at his core, he was a loving family man, a fearless advocate, and a dedicated member of the New Haven community. There are many who talk about visionary leadership and commitment to service. Jim Rawlings was the embodiment of these ideals, dedicating a lifetime to public health and the betterment of our community.

Jim came to New Haven via Providence, Rhode Island where he grew up. After attending Yale University where he earned his Master's in Public Health, Jim began what would be a 35-year distinguished career at Yale New Haven Hospital. He was dedicated to improving the quality of care people received, particularly those in marginalized communities. Jim brought an innovative and creative mind to the hospital. He pioneered Connecticut's first hospital based adult AIDS and Sickle Cell programs, receiving national recognition, as well as overseeing the administrative operations of critical departments like the emergency department, laboratory medicine, and medical/surgical units. When Jim retired, he did so as the hospital's first African American Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of Community Health.

Jim was not only a leader in public health, but in the community as well. Jim served four terms as President of the Greater New Haven branch of the NAACP during which time he modernized the organization and elevated its community impact. His steadfast leadership allowed the organization to grow its potential and its members to make meaningful and transformative contributions to every facet of the New Haven community. Jim was also a respected member of the Connecticut State NAACP, where he served as Health Chair for more than two decades, and at the national level where he served as a Trustee. In all of these roles, Jim gave voice to the multitude of challenges faced by the African American community while also providing a roadmap to overcome those obstacles. He was never one to identify a problem without also pointing to a potential resolution. Though Jim stepped down from his role as President of the Greater New Haven NAACP in 2014, he remained engaged and involved with the organization until his last day. Jim was also well-known for his dedication to conserving and celebrating Native American culture. As an elder of the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe, based in Massachusetts, he dedicated countless hours to ensure that the traditions and teachings of his tribe would be preserved for new generations to learn, under stand, and appreciate.

Though Jim was passionate about many things throughout his life, Sickle Cell Disease may have been his greatest. After his retirement from Yale New Haven Hospital, he served as President and CEO of the Sickle