

I am proud to represent a district demonstrating such leadership and served by an inclusive organization advocating for progress and change. I commend Castro Valley Pride for their extraordinary service and look forward to all they will continue to accomplish.

CONGRATULATING LEMASTER
STEEL ERECTORS ON 50 YEARS
IN BUSINESS

HON. RUDY YAKYM III

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding American success story, LeMaster Steel Erectors of Elkhart, Indiana, as they celebrate their 50th anniversary in business.

Founded in 1975, LeMaster Steel Erectors began as a family-run operation in Elkhart and has since grown into a regional leader in steel erection, proudly serving not only Indiana but also throughout the Midwest.

Over the past five decades, the company has completed countless high-quality metal building projects, as well as specialty installations, demonstrating excellence and innovation at every turn.

LeMaster's growth is a testament to their hard work, skill, and dedication to its workforce: expert supervisors, veteran foremen, and hardworking crews whose craftsmanship and professionalism have earned the respect of clients across Indiana and beyond.

Beyond their business success, LeMaster Steel Erectors has become a pillar of the local economy. With offices in Elkhart and Noblesville, they provide stable employment, support local suppliers, and are a pillar in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating LeMaster Steel Erectors on this remarkable milestone. For 50 years, they have built more than steel structures; they've built the foundation of stronger communities across Indiana. May they continue to have success across Indiana and beyond for years to come.

CELEBRATING ARTURO VARGAS
ON 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate my longtime friend, Arturo Vargas, as he marks 30 years of extraordinary leadership with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and the NALEO Educational Fund.

As a former President of NALEO, I know the kind of dedication it takes to build lasting impact. And for three decades, Arturo has done just that. He has helped shape the civic landscape for Latinos in this country—not by chasing headlines, but by doing the work. The hard, necessary, behind-the-scenes work of building power, lifting up leaders, and making sure our voices are counted.

Under Arturo's leadership, NALEO has become a powerhouse for civic engagement

training elected officials, defending voting rights, championing fair representation, and connecting communities to the ballot box. He's helped demystify the process of government and made sure it actually works for the people.

Arturo knew that in order to elect Latino leaders, he had to become an expert in the systems built against them. He went to Stanford, mastered the ins and outs of redistricting and demographics, and became one of the foremost experts on Latino civic participation. That expertise has helped guide countless policymakers, including many of us in this chamber. If you're a Latino in government, odds are Arturo Vargas has touched your journey.

Even before NALEO, Arturo was doing the work at the Mexican America Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), at the National Council of La Raza, and everywhere justice and opportunity were on the line. Arturo's legacy isn't written in stone—it's ongoing, growing, and living in the generations of leaders he's helped raise. He's not done yet, and thank goodness for that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Arturo Vargas for his years of service, his deep commitment to our democracy, and his unwavering belief in what's possible when every voice is heard and every opportunity is seen.

HONORING HELENE R. DILLARD

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Helene R. Dillard, an academic leader and member of our Davis community, on the occasion of her retirement as Dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at UC Davis. After more than 11 years of service in this role, and a career spanning four decades, Dean Dillard leaves behind a legacy of excellence in education, research, and public service.

A native of San Francisco, Dean Dillard earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology of Natural Resources from UC Berkeley in 1977, followed by a Master's in Soil Science in 1979 and a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from UC Davis in 1984. She went on to spend three decades at Cornell University, where she served in several leadership roles, including Chair of the Department of Plant Pathology, Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Associate Dean in both the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Human Ecology.

Dean Dillard returned to UC Davis in 2014 to lead the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, widely recognized as the top-ranked agricultural school in the Nation and second in the world. As dean, she served as the college's chief academic and administrative officer, overseeing 14 departments, 29 centers and institutes, and a community of more than 7,600 students, 320 faculty, and 585 staff.

Under her leadership, the college advanced major research and infrastructure initiatives. These included six new greenhouses, among them a 14,400-square-foot facility designed to protect critical grapevine collections, upgrades

to the Center for Aquatic Biology and Aquaculture, improvements in water and irrigation systems, and the development of a new indoor vertical farm and goat dairy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dean Dillard guided the college through budget reductions and campus closures, overseeing the transition to online learning and the implementation of safety measures across research and teaching spaces.

Beyond her administrative leadership, Dean Dillard has also led efforts to make education more inclusive and accessible. She has been a strong advocate for experiential learning, supporting opportunities that take students beyond the classroom and into the field. Her commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has included co-leading the college DEI committee, piloting faculty diversity statement requirements, and supporting the launch of Aggie Jumpstart, a program serving first-generation and underserved students.

Dean Dillard's contributions have been widely recognized by her peers and beyond. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society, and recipient of the Excellence in Extension Award, the New York Farmers Medal, and the Walter A. Robinson Community Champion Award, among others. Over the past decade, she has helped secure more than \$442 million in philanthropic support for the college, including 50 million for the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation, the largest individual gift in UC Davis history.

Dean Dillard is known throughout the campus community not only for her leadership but also for her open-door approach, mentorship, and deep commitment to students, faculty, and staff. Dean Dillard is a proud Aggie, a supporter of women's basketball, and enjoys pickleball, fishing, and world travel. She and her husband, Victor, have been married for 44 years and are the proud parents of Jamar Dillard.

Mr. Speaker, Dean Helene Dillard has had a distinguished career in education, research, and public service. Her leadership at UC Davis has made a lasting impact on the university and on the lives of students and colleagues across our region. It is fitting and proper that we recognize her here today and thank her for her many contributions to our Davis community and beyond.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY
LIFE OF REGINALD BERRY

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Reginald Adams Berry, a devoted husband and father. A native of Washington, D.C., Reginald remained in his hometown, building a loving family and distinguished career as an architect.

Among his great accomplishments was his devotion to family—his wife, Sonceria Ann Berry, and daughter, Elizabeth Ruth Berry. A native of Birmingham, Alabama in my district, Ann got her start in the Senate as a staffer for U.S. Senator Howell Heflin in Alabama, rising through the ranks to serve as the first Black

woman Secretary of the U.S. Senate from 2021 to 2025. I know I speak for all of us in expressing our gratitude to the Berry Family for decades of service to their country and to their Congress. We will continue to keep Ann, Elizabeth, and their family in our prayers.

On behalf of Alabama's 7th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the extraordinary life of Reginald Berry.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

SPEECH OF

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to the Fiscal Year 2026 Defense Appropriations Act, which provides \$1 million to complete the Navy Sea Systems Command's final review of centrifuge purifiers for surface combatant vessels.

Centrifuge purifiers are machines that separate liquids into their component parts and are critical to the proper functioning of our naval ships.

The Navy currently relies on a single, non-U.S.-based manufacturer for these centrifuge purifiers, which creates supply chain vulnerabilities and stifles domestic innovation.

My amendment No. 273, included in Bipartisan En Bloc No. 2, gives the Navy the resources it needs to finish a review process it began several years ago. Completing its review will help future delays and ensure the Navy has access to the most advanced and reliable technology available.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

HONORING EDGAR ONTIVEROS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Edgar Ontiveros, a leader and public servant who has been named California's 4th Congressional District 2025 American Dream Award Recipient for Lake County. This award recognizes the achievements of immigrants in our district who have made remarkable contributions to our communities in the areas of Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, or Community Service.

For many years, Mr. Ontiveros came to Hidden Valley to visit his uncle during the weekends. In 2003, he had the chance to visit Clearlake for the first time, sparking his love for the Lake County community. By 2004, he had the opportunity to purchase a house in Clearlake and has lived in the area ever since.

In 2009, Mr. Ontiveros joined the staff of Lake County Behavioral Health Services (LCBHS) as a Cultural Specialist and Ethnic Services Peer Support Specialist. In 2014, LCBHS created the La Voz De la Esperanza community center, appointing Mr. Ontiveros as the center's supervisor. The La Voz, or the Latino Wellness Center, located in Clearlake,

works to connect the Latino Community to culturally relevant service and ensure that Spanish speakers are equipped with tools to navigate health and wellness services. With volunteer translators and various educational opportunities, they help to break the language barrier that often prevents people from seeking help and offer referrals for mental health services when requested.

Mr. Ontiveros' leadership and work as the supervisor of La Voz integral in ensuring countless community members have access to mental health support, help to navigate the health care system, and a sense of community and support. As a Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist, he works to assess critical needs of Latino community members regarding mental health services and support clients, both individual and family.

Mr. Ontiveros also works tirelessly to develop, implement, and maintain activities and programs related to the Latino Wellness Center. He recruits and trains volunteers and develops relationships with partner agencies and community entities. Additionally, Mr. Ontiveros connects Latino community members to services through the Behavioral Health Department, providing key mental health services for those who may not otherwise have access.

Mr. Ontiveros' commitment to service extends well beyond his professional duties. Mr. Ontiveros has taken to the front lines of community support following the countless fires that devastated Lake County, communicating important information and ensuring that Lake County residents have equitable access to emergency services and necessities during major disasters. Mr. Ontiveros is an ordained minister and faith leader. He works as a preacher in Middletown for the South Lake County community.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting and proper that we honor La Voz director Edgar Ontiveros for his service, leadership, and dedication to the Lake County community.

RECOGNIZING LEE VENT

HON. ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the outstanding contributions of Mr. Lee Vent, a lifelong administrator and educator, who was recently recognized as a Legacy Leader by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators. The organization is dedicated to supporting and enhancing educational leadership in Arkansas through various initiatives and legislative advocacy. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the field of education in Arkansas.

Mr. Vent has shown unwavering dedication with an incredible 56-year career in education, including 43 continuous years as a Superintendent, making him the longest continuously serving Superintendent in Arkansas. He currently serves as the President of the Great Rivers ESC Board of Directors and Superintendent of the Clarendon-Holly Grove School District. Mr. Vent is a strong testament to the vision, compassion, and resilience demonstrated by thousands of Arkansas educators.

Mr. Vent's love for learning began in a three-room schoolhouse, which had no indoor plumbing. He has spent most of his educational career in schools along the Mississippi Delta, or what he calls "the pure Delta." He has dedicated his life to selflessly serving the community, and ensuring students are prepared for a promising and successful future. Mr. Vent embodies the very best of American educators, fostering a knowledgeable, collaborative, curious, and innovative learning environment for all.

Mr. Vent's continued efforts are well-recognized through his strength in personal and organizational communication and constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills. His deep commitment to transforming our community through educational resources brings great pride to our district.

It is my honor to congratulate Lee Vent on his recognition as a Legacy Leader and for his decades of service. I thank him for preserving the legacy of learning. I wish him continued success, and may his actions continue to encourage others.

CELEBRATING A CHAMPION,
CASSANDRA WILSON

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true champion from Northwest Ohio, Cassandra Wilson.

Cassandra is not only the first woman in Lucas County to bring home gold medals four years in a row for Special Olympics Powerlifting, she is also a fearless advocate who has served as the first Self Advocate from her county on the State Developmental Disabilities Council.

Since the age of five, Cassandra has been a voice for those too often left unheard. Her advocacy, determination, and unbreakable spirit have shattered barriers and inspired communities.

Even when faced with coaches who doubted her, she stood strong.

She proved—and continues to prove—that strength isn't just about lifting weights; it's about lifting others up with you.

She reminds us all that true leadership begins with courage, and true change comes from those who never give up. She is not just breaking records, she's breaking ground.

Cassandra is a living example that hard work and confidence, not gender or circumstance, defines our potential.

May her story continue to lift hearts, open minds, and pave the way for many more to follow.

HONORING LARRY HOOPER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 21, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable servant, Mr. Larry Hooper.

Born and raised in Natchez, Mississippi, Larry Hooper is a third-generation educator