

urge my colleagues to protect and expand Federal funding for domestic violence shelters, emergency services, and trauma-informed care. I ask that we not just count the dead but honor them through policy.

We must stop confusing austerity with justice. Cutting these services does not save money. Cutting these services costs lives. Let us act with urgency, with dignity, and with the full force of Federal responsibility because all of this will ultimately save lives.

#### PELL GRANTS IN PUERTO RICO

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, in Puerto Rico, over 134,000 students rely on Pell grants to access higher education. That is \$783 million in Federal aid. More than just a number, it is the key to success for students and their families to help pay for tuition, textbooks, and other basic expenses in order to be successful in obtaining their degrees.

These grants open doors to universities, community colleges, technical institutes, institutions that, in turn, train the very people who serve our communities: our teachers, our engineers, our healthcare workers, our middle class, the core of our society.

Yet, these lifelines are under threat. Republicans have proposed billions in cuts from Pell grants and changes to PLUS loans to help pay for tax breaks for billionaires at the expense of education opportunities. They are willing to help the most well-off in our society at the expense of our students.

In Puerto Rico, such a decision will not just hurt individuals. It will ripple through every public hospital, every rural clinic, and every school. It will weaken the very infrastructure that sustains life on the island. Health services provided by students in higher education would be reduced dramatically across the whole Nation, as I learned from meeting with officials from the Carlos Albizu University during a recent district work period.

Let's be clear: Pell grants are not charity. They are a covenant, a promise that talent, not income, should determine your future. To break that promise is not just bad policy. It is a betrayal of American ideals.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this Congress to protect Pell grants. Our whole collective future depends on it.

#### HONORING CHERYL PETERSON ON HER RETIREMENT

(Mrs. FEDORCHAK of North Dakota was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cheryl Peterson of Carrington, North Dakota, as she wraps up a 30-year-long chapter at the local pasta plant.

Since 1984, Cheryl's morning routine has included packing her lunch and driving across town to the pasta plant where she has clocked in 5 days a week.

Cheryl is deaf, but that hasn't stopped her from being a steady and

trusted employee committed to helping others out. In the words of her production manager, Cheryl is a reliable employee with a positive attitude who is willing to help with anything.

She never sought the spotlight. She just showed up, did the work, and made a difference. North Dakota is great because of people like Cheryl: humble, hardworking, and full of heart.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Cheryl Peterson's remarkable career and wishing her a joyful and well-earned retirement.

□ 1030

#### RECOGNIZING DAVE FLOHR

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dave Flohr for his outstanding service to North Dakota.

For more than four decades, Dave has dedicated his career to strengthening communities through safe, stable, and affordable housing.

His leadership at the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency, especially these past 5 years as executive director, has helped thousands of families in North Dakota achieve the dream of homeownership.

Dave's deep knowledge, steady guidance, and passion for serving others have left a lasting effect on our State. He built partnerships, created solutions, and made homeownership possible for so many North Dakotans.

On behalf of our State, I thank Dave for a lifetime of meaningful service. I wish him all the best in retirement, though I know his influence will be felt for years to come. Congratulations.

#### CONGRATULATING DOUG DARLING ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize President Doug Darling for his extraordinary 36-year career at Lake Region State College.

From his early days as a marketing instructor to his decade of leadership as president, Dr. Darling has poured his heart into this institution. He has been a mentor, a builder, and a steady hand, helping shape Lake Region into a place where students from all walks of life can find opportunity and purpose.

Dr. Darling's legacy is measured not just in programs launched or buildings improved, but in the thousands of lives changed under his leadership. His belief in the power of education has left a permanent mark in North Dakota.

As he steps into retirement, I join many across our State in thanking him for his service and in wishing him well in his next chapter. I thank Dr. Darling.

#### CELEBRATING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate two remarkable North Dakota festivals that earned national recognition in Cenex' Hometown Throwdown.

Hazen Chalkfest won second place and a \$20,000 prize thanks to its stunning 3D artwork and more than 600 local participants. Just look at that.

Wahpeton's Borderline Chalkfest claimed third, with a \$15,000 award for its imaginative perspective art, like the chalk s'more that had folks saying: "That looks delicious."

These awards aren't just about art. They reflect strong community spirit, hometown pride, and the creativity that thrives across our beautiful North Dakota. Our small towns are doing big things, earning national attention, drawing families together, and inspiring joy.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of what Hazen and Wahpeton have accomplished. Please join me in congratulating them for showing the rest of the country just how vibrant and innovative North Dakota communities are.

#### CONGRATULATING RANDY HEDBERG

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Randy Hedberg of Parshall on his induction into the North Dakota Sports Hall of Fame.

Randy is a true North Dakota success story, an all-sport college athlete at Minot State, an NFL quarterback, and a legendary coach who never forgot where he came from.

His coaching career spanned 45 years, including 11 years at North Dakota State University, where he helped lead the Bison to not one, not two, not three, but—count it—seven national championships. He also mentored future NFL stars like Carson Wentz and Trey Lance.

What sets Randy apart isn't just his record but his character, humility, and deep commitment to his players and our State. He represents the best of North Dakota.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this body to join me in celebrating Randy Hedberg's remarkable legacy and thanking him for inspiring generations of athletes.

#### RECOGNIZING BAD BUNNY

(Mrs. RAMIREZ of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, this Puerto Rican Heritage Month, I rise to recognize Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, better known for many of us as Bad Bunny, for his worldwide contribution to the arts, music, and culture.

Born and raised in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, Bad Bunny is a global phenomenon. His songs transcend borders, sharing the vibrant culture of Puerto Rico with millions, while stirring a deep sense of pride and connection for Latinos across the globe.

His 2022 album "Un Verano Sin Ti" made history as the first Spanish-language album nominated for the Grammy Award Album of the Year. His recent album "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" has inspired millions as a powerful tribute to Puerto Rico and his hope for its freedom, while reminding us of our shared struggle against imperialism, colonialism, and displacement.

In addition to his music, Benito, Bad Bunny, has used his platform to demand better from world leaders, condemn the xenophobia and anti-immigrant violence of this administration on the island and in this country, and inspire us all to resist and fight back against oppressive governments.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District and the home of Paseo Boricua or Boricua Town, it is my honor to commend Bad Bunny for using his artistry to unite diverse communities and give voice to our shared experience. Gracias to Bad Bunny.

(Spanish translation of the statement made in English is as follows:)

En este Mes de la Herencia Puertorriqueña, Yo me levanto a reconocer a Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, mejor conocido como Bad Bunny, por su contribución a las artes, la música y la cultura.

Nacido y criado en Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, Bad Bunny es un fenómeno global. Sus canciones trascienden fronteras, compartiendo la vibrante cultura puertorriqueña con millones de personas en todo el mundo, a la vez que despierta un profundo sentimiento de orgullo y conexión entre los latinos de todo el mundo. Él sabe que la música y la cultura también trasciende en el corazón.

Su álbum de 2022, *Un Verano Sin Ti*, hizo historia como el primer disco en español nominado al Premio Grammy como Álbum del Año.

Su reciente álbum, *Debí Tirar Más Fotos*, ha inspirado a millones como un poderoso tributo a Puerto Rico y su esperanza por la libertad, a la vez que nos recuerda nuestra lucha compartida contra el imperialismo, el colonialismo y el desplazamiento.

Además de su música, Benito ha usado su plataforma para exigirle mejores resultados a los líderes mundiales, condenar la xenofobia y la violencia antiinmigrante en la isla y en este país e inspirarnos a todos a resistir y luchar contra los gobiernos opresores.

En nombre del Tercer Distrito Congresional de Illinois, casa de Paseo Boricua, yo felicito a Bad Bunny por usar su talento para unir a comunidades diversas y dar voz a nuestras experiencias compartidas.

Gracias, Bad Bunny.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Illinois will provide a translation to the Chair.

#### COMMENDING DENISE RUIZ

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a creative designer, community cultivator, and artist—my constituent, Denise Ruiz.

Denise is a queer Boricua from the Humboldt Park community of Chicago and is the founder and director of The Honeycomb Network, a community empowerment space proudly calling Barrio Boriken home.

With over two decades of direct social service and educator experience, Denise has grown The Honeycomb Network to become a beloved community hub.

In partnership with therapists, educators, artists, and community care providers of diverse backgrounds, The Honeycomb Network provides a hive for community to cowork, create, and sustain one another.

Through healing workshops, a community library, cultural events, and beyond, the network has become a conduit for building community with our neighbors.

I commend Denise and the entire network of artists, healers, and creators who have shared their talents with the community, and I wish them the best as they transition to new physical space in Denise's home, Puerto Rico. Gracias and congratulations to Denise.

#### RECOGNIZING JUSTINA MACHADO

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, in this Puerto Rican and Immigrant Heritage Month, I rise to recognize one of Chicago's own, Justina Machado, a celebrated actress and proud "daughter," "hija" of Chicago's northwest side.

Raised in a working-class Puerto Rican family, Ms. Machado's journey from Lane Tech High School, which is also in my district, to the Broadway stage and Hollywood screens is a testament to her talent, her perseverance, and her deep cultural roots.

From her roles in HBO's "Six Feet Under" to Netflix' "One Day at a Time," and now the Tony-nominated Broadway adaptation of "Real Women Have Curves," Justina has beautifully played characters with immigrant backgrounds.

Through her talent, she has brought visibility, dignity, and complexity to the lives of Latinos and immigrant families who are too often overlooked. Her performances speak not only to where she has been but to who we are. We are resilient, we are proud, and full of possibility.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Justina Machado for using her voice and artistry to uplift our stories and communities with grace, humor, and truth. Gracias and congratulations to Justina.

#### RECOGNIZING CHIEF REED BAER ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. HARRIGAN of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HARRIGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hickory Police Chief Reed Baer of North Carolina's 10th District, who is retiring this summer after more than 30 years of dedicated service.

Chief Baer spent his entire career serving the entire community that he grew up in. He started with the department in 1997 as a patrol officer and worked his way all the way up, from sergeant, to captain, to deputy chief, and eventually to chief in 2023.

Under his leadership, the department focused on officer wellness, training, and building stronger ties with his community. He also helped create new

pathways into the profession for young people in the area.

He has been a steady presence in Hickory for a long time, and his impact will be felt well beyond his time in uniform. I thank him for his service and wish him all the best in his retirement.

#### HONORING JAKE BRIDGES

Mr. HARRIGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a young man from North Carolina's 10th District, firefighter Jake Bridges of Hickory, who died while serving his community.

Jake was just 20 years old. He was born in Cleveland County, raised in Shelby, and graduated from Burns High School in 2023. Not long after that, he joined the Hickory Fire Department as a certified firefighter and EMT.

He hadn't been on the job long, but you wouldn't have known it. He showed up ready to work, ready to serve, and ready to make a difference.

Jake was a man of faith. He loved the Atlanta Braves, loved playing golf, and more than anything, he loved being a firefighter.

His loss is a tough one for Hickory, for the department, and for everyone who knew him. My heart goes out to his mom, his family, and his brothers and sisters in uniform.

He was proud to serve, and we will be proud to remember him.

#### RECOGNIZING COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY BASEBALL TEAM

(Mr. FRY of South Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible season of the Coastal Carolina University baseball team. With grit, heart, and determination, these young men made the Chanticleer Nation, the Grand Strand, and all of South Carolina incredibly proud.

They battled their way into the College World Series final and left it all on the field. From the first pitch to the final out, they represented South Carolina with strength and skill.

I congratulate Coach Schnall and all of the players on a season to remember. Their run inspired fans across the Nation and reminded us why we love this game. We look forward to their continued success in the years to come. Chants Up.

#### HONORING ROBERT FRANKLIN CHILDS III

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a dear friend of mine and a fixture in the Surfside Beach community, Mr. Robert Franklin Childs III, known to most as Bob.

Originally born in Washington, D.C., he spent 37 years working on Capitol Hill, starting in the electrical engineering department under the Architect of the Capitol.

After retiring from the Hill, Bob and his wife, Nancy, moved to Surfside Beach. There he continued his career in public service as the mayor of Surfside Beach from 2016 to 2020. He also served