

Through her extraordinary work with Operation Heartfelt, Mrs. Stepbach has directly and profoundly impacted the lives of students by ensuring they have access to essential food supplies each weekend. Each week, she coordinates, prepares, and delivers food bags for the Weekend Backpack Program, a vital initiative that helps bridge the nutritional gap for students facing food insecurity. Her consistent presence in this program brings stability, dignity, and hope to countless students who rely on this support to meet their basic needs. Mrs. Stepbach's dedication goes far beyond routine service. She leads efforts to gather donations, organize deliveries, foster partnerships, inspire volunteerism, and advocate for youth who might otherwise go unseen. Thanks to her leadership and Operation Heartfelt's commitment, Central High School students who once faced uncertain weekends now have reliable nourishment and the opportunity to focus on their academic and personal growth. Mrs. Stepbach embodies the qualities of a true hero: selfless service, tireless dedication, and a profound impact on the lives of others. Her efforts demonstrate that one person's kindness can create a ripple effect that strengthens an entire community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Pattie Stepbach for her outstanding contributions to our community. For her compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the students of Hernando County, I am proud to honor Mrs. Stepbach as a 2026 Heroes Among Us recipient for Florida's 12th Congressional District.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CARROLL  
E. "ED" HAWN, JR.

**HON. RUSSELL FRY**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 24, 2026*

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Carroll E. "Ed" Hawn, Jr., a veteran, a hardworking member of his community, and someone who will be deeply missed.

Ed proudly served our country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War, and his service was something he carried with him throughout his life.

After returning home, Ed built a long career at Perdue Farms, where he worked his way up to become Shipping Superintendent before his well-deserved retirement.

Outside of work, he enjoyed the simple things in life. He especially loved hobbies like model trains, quilting, and machine embroidery.

He leaves behind his loving wife, Linda, their three children, and an extended family and community who will miss him dearly. Bronwen and I extend our prayers to them as they grieve his passing.

On behalf of South Carolina's 7th District, I express my deepest condolences and thank Ed and his family for his service to our country.

CELEBRATING CHARLES JACK  
PODHAIZER'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 24, 2026*

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th birthday of Charles Jack Podhaizer, a remarkable constituent. Charlie was born on March 23, 1926, and has lived a life marked by service, family, and generosity.

Charlie spent the early years of his life growing up in the Lower East Side of Manhattan as the youngest of 5 children. He spent his early years experiencing the melting pot of cultures from the immigrants arriving through Ellis Island and helped contribute to his family's wellbeing by selling items on the street whilst still finding time to enjoy basketball with his friends.

When the time came, Charlie answered our Nation's call and served valiantly in the Second World War. He was a member of D Company, 232 Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division and fought during the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes Forest. When he returned home, he married his high school sweetheart, Florence Weiss. Together, they moved to Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn and had three children—Gary, Steven, and Todd. Florence unfortunately passed away in 1963, and in 1965, he was remarried to Betty Sheridan who expanded his family with two daughters—Raelyne and Sharon.

In 1965, Charlie and his family became a part of our Bucks County community when they settled down in Yardley, Pennsylvania after years of Charlie commuting from Brooklyn to Eastern Pennsylvania each day for work. It was in Bucks County where Charlie started the Big C, a thriving department store in the Fairless Hills Shopping Center. Shortly thereafter, Charlie was able to expand his operations to two stores across the river in Trenton and Camden, New Jersey.

With his business success, Charlie was able to become very active with local charities as well as his local police department, making sure to help provide for those less fortunate than him and support the community. Charlie is honored to have been named Bucks County Man of the Year among other honors and accolades received for his commitment to the community.

It was later in his career when Charlie decided to step away from the Big C and start auctioneering, which allowed him to fully dedicate himself to this passion and connect with people at the various auctions he attended. He also started a wholesale business, where he traveled the United States to visit his customers. For every connection he made and place he visited, he was always noted for his integrity, passion, caring, honesty, and humor.

As he reaches the age of 100 years old, Charlie is blessed to have 10 grandchildren—Jamie, Adam, David, Derek, and Falynn along with their spouses—as well as 9 great grandchildren—Sofie, Zoe, Kira, Jack, Cameron, Ellie, Brenna, Olivia, and Drew. Following the passing of his wife Betty, he found love once more in his life with Irene Hastings. He has cherished every moment spent with her and the rest of his family since he retired at the age of 75.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in extending our heartfelt congratulations, sincere well-wishes, and God's blessings to Charles Jack Podhaizer on the celebration of his 100th birthday.

RECOGNIZING MR. RYAN  
ABREMSKI

**HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 24, 2026*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary contributions of a dedicated community leader in my district, Mr. Ryan Abremski. Ryan's outstanding leadership, generosity, and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of seniors in Pasco County are quite remarkable. As President of the Pasco Aging Network (PAN) for the past two years, Ryan has devoted himself to strengthening the organization's impact, expanding its visibility, and enhancing services for the elder population in our community.

Founded in 1989, PAN is a coalition of public and private organizations committed to serving seniors, providing a vital forum for professionals to network, share ideas, and disseminate information about elder services. Under Ryan's leadership, PAN has experienced renewed energy, stronger engagement, and increased community awareness. He has worked tirelessly to ensure that monthly meetings are not only opportunities for networking, but also meaningful educational experiences that equip providers with the tools and knowledge necessary to better serve older adults. Ryan understands that collaboration is the cornerstone of effective community service. He has strengthened partnerships among healthcare providers, social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses, ensuring that seniors in Pasco County benefit from a more connected and responsive support system.

His leadership has reinforced PAN's mission to expand information-sharing opportunities, promote education, and develop special projects that enhance services for the elder population. One of Ryan's most remarkable contributions has been his ability to translate vision into tangible results. Through the company he works for, he secured a \$60,000 donation for PAN, an extraordinary achievement that significantly expanded the organization's capacity to fulfill its mission. Beyond financial support, Ryan has worked diligently to increase community awareness about the needs of older adults and the resources available to them. He has been a visible and passionate advocate, consistently promoting PAN's activities and encouraging greater involvement from both public and private stakeholders. Ryan's leadership is characterized by integrity, collaboration, and genuine compassion. He leads not for recognition, but because he believes deeply in serving others—especially those who have contributed so much to our community throughout their lives. His work ensures that seniors in Pasco County have access to coordinated services, informed providers, and a network that is continuously striving to meet their evolving needs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Ryan Abremski for his dedication, vision, and transformative impact on

the Pasco Aging Network and the seniors it serves. For his tireless commitment to improving the lives of older adults in our community, I am proud to honor Ryan Abremski as a 2026 Heroes Among Us recipient for Florida's 12th Congressional District.

#### OPPOSITION TO IRAN WAR

### HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 24, 2026*

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to restate my strong opposition to President Trump's unlawful and unconstitutional decision to order U.S. military strikes on Iran on February 28, 2026. His actions have entered our Nation into war without any imminent threat posed by Iran to the United States and lacking necessary Congressional authorization.

With each day, it becomes more apparent that President Trump's decision to go to war with Iran was a political choice, not a strategic necessity. It is also clear that he has no plan to account for the quickly rising costs for his war of choice.

The President is now reportedly seeking \$200 billion in supplemental funding from Congress for his war—an astounding amount that far surpasses the costs of the war that have been reported during the past four weeks. Additionally, Congress is still waiting for the administration to fully explain where it is spending the additional \$150 billion in funding that the Pentagon received through the Republicans reconciliation package that cut taxes for billionaires at the expense of health care and food assistance programs. Congress also awaits the president's budget request for this year—which is nearly two months overdue.

Let me be clear—I will not write blank checks to the Department of Defense.

Here at home, Americans are also paying for this war through higher prices at the gas pump—prices that continue to rise as attacks expand to critical energy infrastructure and tankers in the Strait of Hormuz. The national average price is up by \$1 more per gallon since the war began. When gas prices go up, so does the price of everything else. If the American people are being asked to pay for this war, then they deserve clear answers from President Trump on why he chose to attack Iran, what objectives justify continued military engagement, and what guardrails are in place to prevent a broader or protracted regional war.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration's rationale for the strikes keeps shifting. First, it was about destroying Iran's nuclear program, despite declaring last June that Iran's nuclear facilities had been "totally obliterated"—a claim Trump repeated in February. Then it was about regime change. Then we heard from Secretary of State Marco Rubio that the reason to launch the war was because Israel was going to attack Iran first. When that rationale was retracted, Americans were told it was about destroying Iran's ballistic missiles and military industrial base. For America to be engaged in large scale conflict overseas for nearly a month—with no clarity for Congress or the American public about why—is shocking, unacceptable, and unprecedented in our history.

In 2002, I was one of 133 members of the House of Representatives to vote against the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution. While I opposed that war from the beginning, President Bush did what President Trump has failed to do—follow the law and the Constitution and explain his rationale, albeit deeply flawed, for taking our Nation to war. There was a monthslong national debate about military action in Iraq, and Congress held hearings, debated the resolution, and voted to approve the operation before President Bush launched the first strikes on Iraq. With respect to Iran, President Trump has denied the American public and the Congress this same process that the Constitution requires.

No one deserves answers more than our U.S. servicemembers and their families. At least 13 courageous service men and women who volunteered to serve their country have given their lives in this conflict, including my constituent, Master Sergeant Nicole Amor of White Bear Lake, Minnesota. At least 200 others have been injured.

Our U.S. servicemembers are serving with a profound sense of duty to our country. For this, all Americans should be grateful. For this, all Americans should be united to support them. The family members and loved ones of our brave troops are also enduring tremendous sacrifices that can never be repaid. For the selfless Americans who sacrificed their lives and bodies in service to our country, we must always remember them and always fulfill the promises we have made to our veterans and their families.

By any measure, America's war in Iraq was a strategic and human tragedy that must not be repeated. As President Trump commits our Nation to another serious conflict in the Middle East, this time with Iran, the American people must not be fooled, not be driven by fear, and not yield to another expensive and painful war of choice. While I have clearly stated my disagreement with this war in Iran, I strongly believe that we must stand united in supporting U.S. servicemembers and their families. We pray that they complete their orders and return home safely and soon.

#### HONORING NATIONAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS WEEK 2026

### HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 24, 2026*

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize March 23, 2026 through March 27, 2026, as National AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) Week.

The AHEC program was originally authorized in 1971 and worked in conjunction with other Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA) programs to provide health professionals to staff the brick-and-mortar Community Health Centers. Today, Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) offer hands-on and innovative health career curriculums for pre-college level students, and are committed to continuing education, clinical training of health professionals and responding to community health needs. The Nation's 300 AHECs are in nearly every state and in multiple U.S. terri-

ories. Administered by HRSA, AHECs are federally funded, and many are also supported by state governments, foundations, or other partners.

AHEC clinical training placements put health profession students in a variety of real-world settings, such as migrant, urban, and rural community health clinics and health departments that provide healthcare to rural and underserved populations. Connecting students to community populations helps facilitate future engagement and network alliance building for health career students to remain in their clinical practice regions and continue providing more sustainable healthcare in rural and underserved areas following their training.

AHECs are also responsive to community priorities. They are dedicated to collaboratively developing community health education curriculums, for both online and face-to-face training programs, through unique partnerships that meet the broader range of public health needs of diverse and severely rural and underserved populations.

The need to strengthen the healthcare workforce, particularly for the underserved, continues. According to new Association of American Medical Colleges, the U.S. could see a shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034, and the American Hospital Association says more than 200,000 new registered nurses are needed each year to meet increasing health care needs and to replace nurses entering retirement. AHECs continue to be committed to addressing shortage areas and expanding the health care workforce, while maximizing and facilitating distribution, especially in rural and underserved communities.

In the past 5 years, the AHEC program has trained 2 million healthcare professionals, who are prepared to deliver culturally appropriate, high-quality, team-based care, with an emphasis on primary care for rural and underserved populations.

I have had the opportunity to work closely with the Virginia AHEC and have witnessed the amazing work they are doing. The Virginia AHEC regions are made up of dedicated teams of professionals who collaborate with healthcare providers, educators, and community leaders, to create innovative programs and initiatives that address the evolving healthcare needs of our Commonwealth's underserved population.

The mission of Virginia AHEC is to provide interprofessional and educational resources to motivate, recruit, train, and maintain a healthcare workforce dedicated to serving rural regions with the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2024, they offered continuing education to over 1,000 health care workers, pipeline programming for over 900 high school students, and clinical training to over 1,800 health professional students to accomplish this mission.

Virginia AHEC strives to provide experiential learning opportunities for health professional students in every region. In 2024, Virginia AHEC helped 1,844 students complete 4,668 hours of training at rural and medically underserved clinical training sites.

Virginia AHEC provides specialized programming for health professional students who wish to work in Primary Care, specifically in rural and/or medically underserved areas in Virginia, called the VA AHEC Scholars Program. In 2024, Virginia AHEC had 224 active VA AHEC Scholars. Each Scholar completed