

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

40 hours of education and 40 hours of clinical training through participation in the program.

As a major component of the program, Virginia AHEC created a statewide, a synchronous Community Health Worker Training Program. Since the creation of the program three years ago, VA AHEC has trained over 300 Community Health Workers.

The Southwest Virginia AHEC is located at the Bradley Free Clinic. The Bradley Free Clinic works with students from 28 academic programs spanning medicine, dentistry, residency training, counseling, and public health, providing hands-on clinical and community-based learning experiences. My son personally experienced the benefits of this hands-on learning environment to prepare him for a career in healthcare.

On behalf of my constituents at Virginia AHEC program and the national AHEC program more broadly, I call on my colleagues to join me in recognizing March 23, 2026 through March 27, 2026, as National AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) Week.

RECOGNIZING MS. CHRIS HOGARTH

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 outstanding contributions of a dedicated volunteer in my district, Ms. Chris Hogarth. Chris has been an invaluable volunteer at the ReStores, dedicating her time, energy, and organizational skills to support the community and ensure the stores operate efficiently. Chris has taken exceptional care of the book room, keeping it organized and welcoming for shoppers. She has also overseen the games and toys section, carefully sorting and displaying items to make them accessible and enjoyable for families. In addition, Chris has played a crucial role in managing all holiday donations, helping to bring seasonal joy and support to the community.

Her consistent commitment, attention to detail, and tireless service have made a meaningful impact on the ReStores' operations and the customers they serve. Chris Hogarth exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism and selfless service that strengthens our communities and touches countless lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Chris Hogarth for her outstanding contributions and dedication to serving others. For her generosity, commitment, and exemplary service, I am proud to honor Ms. Hogarth as a 2026 Heroes Among Us recipient for Florida's 12th Congressional District.

HONORING CHARLES RICHTER ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. MICHAEL CLOUD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Charles Richter, a World War II veteran and Victoria resident, as he celebrates his 100th birthday. His life reflects service, perse-

verance, and a deep commitment to family and country.

Charles was born on March 23, 1926, in Yoakum, Texas, into a German American family with deep roots in South Texas. He spent his early years in Brownsville before moving to Victoria. As the oldest of six children, during the years surrounding the Great Depression and World War II, he helped support his family while completing his education.

The day after graduating from Victoria High School in 1944, Charles enlisted in the United States Navy and served during the final year of World War II as a boiler room technician aboard destroyer escorts protecting merchant convoys in the Atlantic Theater.

Following the war, Charles earned a business degree from Texas A&I University in Kingsville, married in 1951, and then began a career as a transportation superintendent. After retirement, he operated a cattle ranch and dedicated his time to mentoring youth as an assistant Scoutmaster. In recognition of his lifelong commitment to service, Charles was awarded the "Spirit of Scouting" Award by the Rio Grande Council's South Texas Council on January 22, 2026.

As he celebrates a century of life, we honor his legacy of hard work, humility, and devotion to his family, community, and country. I wish Charles a happy birthday.

RECOGNIZING MS. PEGGY GAUSE

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 an exceptional volunteer in my district, Ms. Peggy Gause. Since 2012, Peggy has devoted 14 years of her time and talent to helping Friends Grief Services provide programs and resources to people of all ages who have experienced loss and grief.

Following the sudden death of her husband and daughter, Peggy reached out to help others as a way to heal herself. She has provided invaluable clerical support and record management assistance, including entering information into electronic records, answering phones, assisting with reports, and couriers interoffice mail. Peggy also serves on the organization's Advisory Board, actively participates in fundraising activities, and continues to advocate for grief services.

Peggy has served as President of L.I.F.T. (Living Information for Today), a support group for widows and widowers sponsored by Dignity Memorial. She has helped create programs that foster social connections, such as "Game Day" and "Café Break," and recently coordinated Friends Grief Services' first Arts & Crafts Fair. Affectionately known in the office as "Peggy H2O" to distinguish her from another volunteer, she exemplifies dedication, compassion, and selfless service. Peggy's tireless work reflects her commitment to helping others navigate grief and loss. She is an exceptional volunteer and a true hero in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Peggy Gause for her outstanding contributions and unwavering dedication to Friends Grief Services. For her inspira-

tional commitment to others, I am proud to honor Ms. Gause as a 2026 Heroes Among Us for Florida's 12th Congressional District. Her compassion, energy, and leadership have made a lasting impact, and our community is stronger because of her efforts.

RECOGNIZING BENJAMIN MONTGOMERY

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Benjamin Montgomery and to commend him on more than 35 years of public service as he retires on March 31, 2026.

Mr. Montgomery first started working for the City of Chino Hills in 2006 as the Neighborhood Services Manager, which would lead to more than 20 years of dedicated service to the city. In 2014, he joined the City Manager's Office as the Assistant to the City Manager until being promoted to Deputy City Manager in 2015, and Assistant City Manager in 2017. In April 2019, he was appointed as the City Manager of Chino Hills by the City Council, where he has served for the past seven years.

Prior to his service with Chino Hills, Mr. Montgomery worked for other communities across Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties. His strong understanding of municipal operations, regional partnerships, and locally-focused governance has benefited residents across the Inland Empire.

Throughout his time with the City of Chino Hills, Mr. Montgomery led various programs, departments, and divisions, including: community relations, emergency management, code enforcement, water conservation, information technology, human resources, and major service contracts for solid waste, risk management, public safety, and animal care and control.

As City Manager of Chino Hills, Ben guided the city through challenging periods, including record-breaking fire emergencies and a global pandemic. He safeguarded the city's financial obligations and commitments to public safety, leading to a long list of remarkable accomplishments including local transit improvement projects and stronger homeless service partnerships.

Beyond his remarkable service to Chino Hills, he also is known for his dedication to mentoring local public service professionals at all levels through organizations such as the Municipal Management Association of Southern California and the League of California Cities, where he remains an active member. Mr. Montgomery is also an engaged member of the broader Chino Valley community as seen by his involvement with the Rancho del Chino Rotary Club and the Chino Valley YMCA Board of Managers.

For his remarkable career marked by more than 35 years of public service, it is my honor to recognize Mr. Benjamin Montgomery. His commitment to Chino Hills, the Inland Empire, and beyond is worthy of the highest commendation.