

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Alexandra Karabatsos for her outstanding service and wishing her all the best in her next chapter.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
MR. JASON DRAGON

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career and dedicated service of Mr. Jason P. Dragon as he retires after 27 years in law enforcement.

Mr. Dragon currently serves as the Resident Agent in Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of Professional Responsibility in Houston, Texas, where he has led critical efforts overseeing internal investigations across a six-state region.

Throughout his tenure, he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to integrity, accountability, and the rule of law.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Dragon has taken on some of the most complex and demanding assignments in federal law enforcement.

As a supervisory special agent with Homeland Security Investigations in Houston, he led efforts targeting violent crime and transnational gang activity—work that earned recognition from both the Houston Police Department and HSI leadership for outstanding investigative achievement.

He also served our Nation abroad through the Visa Security Program, helping prevent criminals and suspected terrorists from entering the United States, and led rapid response efforts supporting ICE personnel and infrastructure following natural disasters.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Dragon served at HSI Headquarters here in Washington, D.C., including as a Congressional Fellow in my office, where he played a key role in the passage of the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act, strengthening our Nation's border security framework.

From his early work combating child exploitation in Connecticut to his service as a Border Patrol agent and Connecticut State Trooper, Mr. Dragon's career reflects a lifelong commitment to protecting others and upholding justice.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 28th District of Texas, I thank Mr. Dragon for his decades of service and wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement.

HONORING THE HOUCHIN COMMUNITY BLOOD BANK ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Houchin Community Blood Bank as they celebrate their 75th Anniversary. For the past 75 years, Houchin Community Blood Bank has been a lifeline connecting donors and patients in need across all of Kern Coun-

ty's hospitals, and in doing so, became a staple of our local community. Since its creation, Houchin's mission has been simple: "protect the local blood supply so patients in Kern County are not left waiting." Today, we honor their hard work, sacrifice, and constant devotion to helping others, as we join them in celebration.

Until Houchin's founding in 1951, Kern County had no community blood bank. Blood had to be transported from Los Angeles or San Francisco and would take at least a day to arrive; a time frame far too slow for the residents of Kern County whose lives were on the line. In light of these difficulties, members of the Kern County Medical Society asked their fellow member Elmer Houchin to help secure them a permanent site to build on. Through the Houchin Foundation, Elmer donated land on G Street in downtown Bakersfield as well as an endowment in memory of his mother, Sarah Alice Houchin. The blood bank's doors opened in April of 1951, and within a year the bank's original name "Kern Community Blood Bank" was changed to "Houchin Community Blood Bank" in honor of the family who made its opening possible.

Houchin currently works with local hospitals such as Bakersfield Memorial, Kern Medical, and Bakersfield Heart Hospital, as well as organizations such as the Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center and Dignity Health Group. Their organization shares resources across all 50 states and is affiliated with some of the Nation's most trusted blood supply organizations. They are currently working tirelessly on key projects like the Pre-Hospital Transfusion Initiative, and a Capital Campaign to raise funds and awareness.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in commending Jonathan Bautista, Houchin's CEO, and his staff at Houchin for their support for the people of Kern County. It is thanks to them that the lives of residents are saved every day. I join all those gathered here in wishing them continued success and look forward to seeing their continued part in Kern County's future as a leader among its medical professionals.

HONORING CHRIS HARTLEY

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Chris Hartley, in recognition of his more than twenty-seven years of extraordinary service for our Napa Valley and California law enforcement communities.

Chris Hartley was born in October 1960 and grew up in the Napa Valley. He graduated from Napa High School in 1979. He then served in the United States Marine Corps as an Amphibious Assault Vehicle Crewman, Infantryman, and Reconnaissance Marine. He rose to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant and served for over 20 years. During his time in the Marine Corps, Chief Hartley served during the Beirut Bombing and Grenada, and he participated in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. While in the military, Chief Hartley attended the USMC Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Academy and com-

pleted courses in Marine Corps Warfighting, Firearms Instructor, Rappel Master, Small Boat Operations Instructor, and Parachute Jump School. Chief Hartley left the Marine Corps in 1999 and subsequently attended Mira Costa and Palomar Junior Colleges and then went on to study at Colorado State University and the University of Virginia. Chief Hartley is also a graduate of Class 263 of the prestigious Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy.

After serving his country in the United States Marine Corps, Chief Hartley came back to the Napa Valley to work in law enforcement. In 1999, Chief Hartley began his position as a police officer with the City of St. Helena. During his time at the St. Helena Police Department, he served as a Motorcycle Officer, Range and Tactics Instructor, Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Chief. He became the Chief of Police in 2019. As Chief, he guided our community through two major fires, the first public safety power shutoffs, the Covid-19 Pandemic, and major social justice reforms.

Chief Hartley's contributions have been widely recognized across our law enforcement community, most prominently when St. Helena's Police Department was awarded the Distinguished Silver Medal for Excellence in Policy Management by the risk assessment agency, Lexipol. Chief Hartley is widely respected among peace officers across California and is loved by the residents of St. Helena.

Chief Hartley is dedicated to helping our Napa Valley community and has served as a member of the St. Helena Rotary Club, Napa Elks, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the A-Z Foundation for Disabled Veterans. He has continued to serve St. Helena through his support of the UpValley Family Center, Napa Emergency Women's Shelter, We Care Animal Rescue, Monarch Education Center of Napa Valley, and Napa Victim Witness Services. Chief Hartley trains and supports law enforcement in the Napa Valley and across California through his work as an instructor with the Napa Valley College Police Academy, as chairman of the board for Napa County Special Investigations, and as a member of the California Police Chiefs Association, FBI National Academy, California Gangs Association, and the California Narcotics Association.

Chief Hartley married his wife Shelley Hartley in August 1980. They are blessed with three children named Christina, Casandra, and James, along with 8 grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Chris Hartley has dedicated his life to protecting St. Helena, California, and the United States of America. He has transformed the lives of those around him through his service and mentorship to others. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

RECOGNIZING SIENNA KITTLES

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sienna Kittles for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Sienna 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 Sienna, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Sienna's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Arvada West High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Sienna Kittles on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO WARD
BEECHER

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to my good friend and Navy veteran, Ward Beecher, who passed away on Tuesday, April 7, 2026. Ward lived a life grounded in love, service, family, and country, and he will be deeply missed.

Ward was a true patriot. His love for this country wasn't just spoken—it was lived. From 1956 to 1960, Ward proudly served in the United States Navy aboard the MSO-490 minesweeper. That service was a defining part of who he was, and he carried the values of duty, loyalty, and quiet strength with him for the rest of his life. Ward was married to his wife, Diane Beecher, for 69 beautiful years. Together, they built a family that became his greatest pride—his three daughters, Lori, Lynn, and Jann; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren.

At home, Ward was known for his warm sense of humor. He loved joking around with his grandkids, managed to give everyone in the family a nickname, and ended every visit by saying 'toddles.' He found joy in life's simple pleasures: cheering on the Oklahoma Sooners, listening to 50s music, enjoying an In-N-Out burger, and reminiscing about his time growing up on the family farm in Oklahoma. Those stories were part of who he was, and he loved sharing them with anyone who would listen.

I extend my personal and heartfelt condolences to the Beecher family, his friends, and everyone fortunate enough to know Ward. Although he may be gone, the many contributions he made to his family and country have left an enduring legacy.

HONORING THE WORK OF MICHAEL
T. HERMAN

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Michael Herman on his work with Chicago House as acting Chief Executive Officer for seven years, serving communities impacted by HIV/AIDS in Chicago.

Mr. Herman grew up in a large Irish, German, Lithuanian, and Catholic family that put an emphasis on family, faith, and education.

Living in Chicago's Southwest side, Mr. Herman attended school at the church across the street from his childhood home. He entered the seminary at a young age, eventually attending college seminary at Loyola University, and moving on to getting his Master of Divinity. In 1989, Mr. Herman was ordained as a Catholic priest and went on to serve the Hispanic communities of Chicago.

Valuing service but wanting to live as a gay man, Mr. Herman left active ministry and became Chicago House's Chief Development Officer (CDO), serving the LGBTQ+ community and those vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. During his time as CDO at Chicago House, Mr. Herman also became Vice President of Philanthropy at Kohl Children's Museum. In 2019, Michael took the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Chicago House.

Mr. Herman's work with Chicago House has improved the lives of thousands of Chicagoans affected by HIV and AIDS. Serving as CEO, he led Chicago House's efforts to end the AIDS epidemic in Illinois by 2030, while also providing housing support, healthcare, employment counseling, and care for transgender individuals. Continuing to embrace his lifelong values of family, faith, and education, Mr. Herman's work has touched vulnerable communities across Chicago.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone to join me to congratulate Michael T. Herman on his seven years as the Chicago House CEO. Mr. Herman is a striking example of leadership and service to one's own community.

RECOGNIZING SARAH ROBERTS
FOR RECEIVING THE GIRL
SCOUT GOLD AWARD

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Sarah Roberts, an incredible Girl Scout from Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast, for demonstrating remarkable leadership, inspiring creativity, and a commitment to making a lasting impact by earning the most prestigious award in Girl Scouting, the Gold Award.

Gold Award Girl Scouts are trailblazers who address the most pressing issues facing their communities and the world with quantifiable, dependable, and far-reaching results. To earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, high school-age Girl Scouts identify and investigate an issue they care about, devise a plan, and then lead a team of experts and community members to implement a project that produces enduring change. Sarah helped bridge the digital gap by empowering senior citizens and individuals with accessibility challenges to use computers more efficiently and with more confidence than before. Ms. Roberts provided workshops that enabled individuals to adjust their computers to meet their needs by teaching dynamic computer skills and introducing useful tools and resources they could rely on for continued support.

Sarah's achievement is an inspiration across our Commonwealth and beyond, reminding us of all of what it means to be a servant leader. As she continues her journey, I have no doubt that Ms. Roberts will build

upon this strong foundation to accomplish even greater things. We are very proud of her contributions today and look forward to the many ways she will continue to positively shape her community and our Nation.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Sarah Roberts of Troop 1004 for this outstanding accomplishment. On behalf of Virginia's 1st Congressional District, I commend her for achieving the highest distinction in Girl Scouts and thank her for making such a positive and lasting impact in our community.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF MR. ROY RAMIRO BARRERA,
SR.

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 27, 2026

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Roy Ramiro Barrera, Sr., who passed away on Sunday, March 15, 2026. A legal giant in San Antonio and across the state of Texas, Mr. Barrera helped pave the way for Hispanic excellence in the legal profession. He is survived by his children, Yolanda Barrera Arellano, Roy Barrera, Jr., Gilbert Barrera, Carmen Barrera Ramirez, and Robert Barrera, along with many beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

As a child, Mr. Barrera demonstrated an undeniable work ethic and worked numerous jobs throughout the San Antonio community. While in high school at San Antonio Vocational and Technical School, Mr. Barrera met Carmen Zendejas, where the two sparked a relationship that would last over seven decades, including 67 years of marriage.

Upon graduation from San Antonio Vocational and Technical School in 1944, Mr. Barrera joined the U.S. Army and served in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater during World War II. While overseas, he received two overseas service bars and a good conduct medal.

Following his honorable discharge in 1946, using G.I. Bill benefits, he enrolled in the St. Mary's University School of Law. He would go on to earn his Juris Doctorate in 1951. That same year he joined the Bexar County District Attorney's Office as an assistant district attorney. In 1957, at the age of 28, he argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Alcorta v. Texas*. In that same year, he and fellow prosecutor, Anthony Nicholas, started their own firm, Nicholas & Barrera.

As Mr. Barrera built his legal career, in 1968, Texas Governor John Conally appointed him to become the first Hispanic Secretary of State. In 1973 he served as the first Hispanic President of the San Antonio Bar Association and remained a State Bar of Texas Foundation Fellow until his death. Mr. Barrera continued to practice law into his nineties, remaining a constant, invaluable resource for generations of attorneys.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the incredible life and remarkable legacy of Mr. Roy Barrera, Sr. He inspired many. He was a true leader, and I am grateful for his decades of service to our San Antonio community.