

RECOGNIZING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF MASSMUTUAL

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 15, 2026*

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional milestone for an institution in Massachusetts' 1st Congressional District: the 175th anniversary of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. For generations, MassMutual has played a vital role in the financial security of millions of Americans and the economic strength of western and central Massachusetts.

Founded on May 15, 1851, in Springfield, Massachusetts, where it remains headquartered today, MassMutual has stood for nearly two centuries as a pillar of stability and integrity, maintaining a steadfast and deep commitment to the communities it serves. From its earliest days, the company has embraced an enduring mission: to help people secure their future and protect the ones they love.

For 175 years, MassMutual has been a consistent source of strength in moments of change, challenge, and celebration. They have supported American families through defining periods such as the Great Depression and the COVID-19 pandemic, helping communities endure and recover.

Beyond its core business, MassMutual has demonstrated a strong commitment to community investment and civic responsibility. Through initiatives such as the MassMutual Foundation, the company has supported education, workforce development, and nonprofit organizations across the Commonwealth and throughout the country.

Institutions like MassMutual remind us of the enduring value of trust, responsibility, and service. Their legacy is measured not only in years, but in the lives strengthened through financial security and opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating MassMutual on 175 years of excellence and recognizing its continued contributions to our communities and our economy. I wish the company and its employees continued success in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE BLIND IN GREECE

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 15, 2026*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the American Friends of the Blind in Greece, an organization based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, that is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year.

Sharing a deep concern for the poor living conditions experienced by the blind in Greece, a group of Greek-Americans in New England founded the AFBG in 1946. The organization began by initiating smaller projects, including procuring funding for five Greek students to train in the United States. They aimed to expand opportunities for the blind and to prepare

them with the necessary skills to earn a living despite their impairment.

Their mission grew over the years. Throughout the twentieth century, the American Friends of the Blind in Greece helped to fund and design numerous programs to teach essential skills, including weaving, sewing, and reading braille, while also funding projects to teach agricultural and manufacturing trades. Their work culminated in the opening of the Lighthouse for the Blind in 1975, a centralized location for employing blind people in skilled manufacturing jobs. The AFBG also funded the opening of a metals workshop and a Tactual Museum to expand access to museum-quality art to the sightless.

Like all organizations, the American Friends of the Blind in Greece has faced setbacks. The 1999 Athens earthquake caused costly damages to the Lighthouse for the Blind and the Tactual Museum. The diligent fundraising of organization members and the generous contributions of Americans across the country helped to rebuild and repair the damaged buildings to ensure the continued support of the blind community.

Even in an era of greater awareness in the twenty-first century, the work of the American Friends of the Blind in Greece remains critical. Both the Greek Financial Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic threatened the stability and prospects for countless blind people in Greece. Confronting public and private funding cuts, job losses, and reduced services, the AFBG again answered the call, raising historic funds to preserve support for sightless communities.

Today, on behalf of New Hampshire's 1st Congressional District, I am honored to congratulate the American Friends of the Blind in Greece for 80 years of exceptional service. I commend its members for their compassion and thank them for their caring, diligent work. It is inspiring to see a local organization make a global impact, and I encourage all of us to learn from its history. From small towns in New Hampshire to big cities across the globe, there is so much we can achieve by serving others. I thank the American Friends of the Blind in Greece for showing us the impact we can make when we stand up for our values, and I wish them all the best in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE KAPPA OMEGA OMEGA CHAPTER OF THE ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY

**HON. DAVID G. VALADAO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 15, 2026*

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Kappa Omega Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in Bakersfield, California, on its 50th anniversary.

Chartered on May 13, 1976, Kappa Omega Omega became the first Alpha Kappa Alpha chapter established in Bakersfield. Built through the vision and dedication of community leaders like Susianna Anderson and the chapter's founding members, the organization was created to strengthen the community through service and mentorship. Over the past five decades, the chapter has remained a driving force for education and positive change

throughout Kern County and the Central Valley.

Since 1980, Kappa Omega Omega has hosted its annual Graduation Awards Program, helping African American students prepare for higher education and awarding more than 1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors. Their Miss Fashionetta fundraiser has also served as a mentoring experience for young women as they transition from high school to college, providing them with invaluable career exploration and scholarship opportunities.

Beyond their educational initiatives, the chapter's Childhood Hunger Initiative Power Pack (CHIPP) program has helped fight childhood hunger by providing meals to families in need. They have also supported local seniors through the Senior Shower of Love, participated in health efforts like the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, and partnered with organizations across the community, including the Boys and Girls Club Angel Tree Project.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the sisters of Kappa Omega Omega on this remarkable milestone and in thanking them for fifty years of dedicated service to Bakersfield, Kern County, and the Central Valley.

CONGRATULATING PEORIA POLICE CHIEF ERIC ECHEVARRIA ON HIS RETIREMENT

**HON. DARIN LAHOOD**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 15, 2026*

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize and honor Peoria Police Chief Eric Echevarria on his retirement and thank him for his decades of dedicated service to the people of Illinois and our Nation.

Chief Echevarria has served as Chief of the Peoria Police Department for the past five years, leading the department with professionalism, integrity, and a commitment to strengthening public safety throughout the Peoria community. Prior to his service in Peoria, Chief Echevarria dedicated twenty-two years to the Elgin Police Department, where he rose through the ranks and built a reputation as a respected law enforcement leader devoted to protecting and serving others.

Before beginning his law enforcement career, Chief Echevarria proudly served four years in the United States Marine Corps. His military service instilled in him the values of discipline, leadership, and sacrifice that continued to define his career in public service.

Throughout his tenure as Chief, Eric embraced innovative approaches to modern policing and worked to build stronger relationships between law enforcement and the community. Under his leadership, the department adopted new technologies to address crime more effectively, incorporated social workers into co-responder units to better assist individuals in crisis, and prioritized meaningful engagement with residents across Peoria. His efforts contributed to a significant reduction in violent crime and helped strengthen trust between officers and the community they serve.

Chief Echevarria's leadership has left a lasting impact on the City of Peoria and set an example for departments across Illinois. He

has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public safety while recognizing the importance of compassion, accountability, and community partnership in effective policing.

I want to extend my sincere congratulations and gratitude to Chief Eric Echevarria for his distinguished career and service to our country and communities. I wish Eric, his family,

and loved ones all the best as he begins this next chapter in retirement.