

Those who knew Steve will remember his humor, kindness and extraordinary commitment to community. Steve Kelso was, in every sense, a quintessential Nebraskan.

On behalf of the people of Nebraska, I extend heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, coworkers and all those whose lives he touched through his years of service.

RECOGNIZING NORMA CES

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Norma Ces, as she enters retirement from her long-time role at the Embassy of Ireland, USA. Her exceptional service over the years deserves celebration. I know I join many of my colleagues in commending her for all she has done to promote the relationship between the United States of America and Ireland.

Norma first joined the Embassy of Ireland, USA in December 1984, first as assistant to the Deputy Chief of Mission. She then moved to the consular section in 2000, where she helped Irish citizens in need and assisted many Americans secure Irish citizenship and their first Irish passport. In 2010, she started in the Ambassador's office. She has since supported four different Irish Ambassadors to the United States, Michael Collins, Anne Anderson, Daniel Mulhall, and Geraldine Byrne Nason.

Her exceptional dedication and passion for her work have undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the Irish American community, especially in Washington, D.C. Norma played a key role in enhancing Ireland's political, cultural, and economic engagement in D.C. and across the United States. Her contribution to the Embassy has been essential in facilitating the vibrant transatlantic relationship between the United States and Ireland. The deep community that she helped foster is a testament to her unwavering commitment to excellence in her daily life.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Norma's retirement, we honor her contribution to the Embassy of Ireland, USA.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes on Friday, May 15, 2026, for an important family commitment. I will be present and voting when the House returns to session this week. Had I been present, I would have voted; NAY on Roll Call No. 174, and YEA on Roll Call No. 175.

HONORING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF MS. JENNIFER YEZAK

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jennifer Yezak of Bremond, Texas, on her retirement after more than 35 years of distinguished service to American agriculture.

Jennifer currently serves as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations for Texas A&M AgriLife, and she is one of those rare individuals who has touched nearly every corner of agricultural policy.

From the Texas House and Texas Department of Agriculture, to USDA, to the halls of Congress, to the boardrooms of national associations, and ultimately to Texas A&M AgriLife, she has been the university system's leading voice for agriculture and natural resources in Washington.

Along the way, she earned a reputation as someone who gets things done, who builds relationships that last, and who never lost sight of why any of this work matters—the farmers, ranchers, and rural communities she grew up among in central Texas.

Texas A&M and the entire Texas agricultural community have been well served by Jennifer's expertise, her steady hand, and her deep commitment to advancing policies that support food production, natural resources, and rural prosperity.

She has been an invaluable advocate, and her fingerprints are on more wins for Texas agriculture than most people will ever know.

We wish Jennifer and her family all the best as she begins this next chapter. She has more than earned it.

HONORING DR. GONZALO SALAZAR'S SERVICE TO LOS FRESNOS CISD

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Dr. Gonzalo Salazar for his dedication to the students, educators, and families of Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District (CISD).

Over the course of his distinguished career, Dr. Salazar has served in numerous leadership roles within the Los Fresnos CISD, culminating in his tenure as Superintendent beginning in 2006. From his early service as Assistant Principal at Lopez-Riggins Elementary to his leadership as Principal of Palmer-Laakso Elementary and Olmito Elementary, Dr. Salazar consistently worked to expand opportunities and improve outcomes for students.

Under his leadership, campuses earned recognition for college readiness from the Texas Education Agency, reflecting his commitment to equipping students with the tools they need to succeed. As Superintendent, Dr. Salazar prioritized educator support through professional development and innovative leadership initiatives, strengthening the district as a whole

and fostering a culture of excellence. In recognition of these efforts, Dr. Salazar was named Region One Superintendent of the Year in 2024, reflecting his vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment to educational achievement.

Dr. Salazar's career stands as a great example of the impact someone can have on an entire community. His legacy will live on in the success of the countless students and families he has served throughout South Texas.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Texas's 34th Congressional District, I commend Dr. Salazar for his exemplary service and extend my deepest gratitude for his contributions to the Los Fresnos community and beyond.

HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JOHN LYLE KEENAN

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the life and legacy of Mr. John Lyle Keenan of Jasper County, Mississippi. Mr. Keenan was a respected law enforcement officer and a devoted husband, father, grandfather, neighbor, and friend whose service and character left a lasting mark on his community.

Born in Rose Hill, Mississippi, Mr. Keenan graduated from Heidelberg High School in 1964. He began his career at La-Z-Boy in Newton before entering public service as a deputy with the Jasper County Sheriff's Office. In 1977, he joined the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks as a Conservation Officer, where he served with distinction for more than three decades. He rose to the rank of Captain for District IV before retiring in 2010. Two years later, the Jasper County Board of Supervisors appointed him interim sheriff, and he concluded his law enforcement career as a bailiff for the Circuit Court.

Mr. Keenan's dedication to public service extended well beyond his official duties. He was deeply committed to the stewardship of Mississippi's natural resources and served as Jasper County Director of the Pat Harrison Waterway District. He also held leadership roles as president of the Jasper Farm Bureau, the Jasper County Soil and Water Commission, the Meridian Stockyard Board of Directors, the Mississippi Pork Producers, and the Heidelberg Academy Athletic Booster Club.

He remained active in numerous civic and agricultural organizations, including the Jasper County Forestry Association, the Jasper County Livestock Association, and the Bay Springs Lions Club, in his personal time, he worked in forestry management, raised swine and cattle, and maintained a garden, reflecting a lifelong connection to the land and the people who depend on it.

Mr. Keenan was widely regarded as a man of integrity, honor, loyalty, and wisdom. Many sought his counsel on both personal and professional matters, a testament to the trust he earned throughout his life. He was a faithful member of Wesley Independent Methodist Church, where he lived out the values that guided his service.

Mr. Keenan will be deeply missed not only by his family but by the entire Jasper County community. It is a privilege to recognize his life, his service, and his enduring commitment to the people of Mississippi, here in the United States House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING POLICE CORPORAL
MARCO VALLADARES

HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Police Corporal Marco Valladares for his outstanding service to the City of Euless as he retires after more than three decades in law enforcement and a lifetime dedicated to serving others.

Before joining the Euless Police Department, Corporal Valladares proudly served in the United States Marine Corps from 1982 to 1990 as a RADAR Technician on the F-4 Phantom Jet Fighter, earning an Honorable Discharge for his service to our Nation.

Throughout his distinguished career with the Euless Police Department, Corporal Valladares served in numerous roles, including Patrol Officer, Gang Officer, SWAT Officer, Bicycle Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer, Criminal Investigator, and School Resource Officer. Promoted to Police Corporal in 1993, he served with professionalism and integrity for more than 30 years.

Among his many contributions, Corporal Valladares established the Euless Bicycle Patrol Program, strengthening relationships between officers and the community through neighborhood policing efforts. He also served on the Euless SWAT Team for more than a decade and later became a SWAT Hostage Negotiator and Criminal Investigator, bringing steady leadership to some of the department's most difficult situations.

Since 2012, Corporal Valladares has served as the School Resource Officer at Central Junior High School, where he became a trusted mentor and role model to countless students and families in the Euless community.

A dedicated public servant and lifelong learner, Corporal Valladares earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice, Summa Cum Laude, from Columbia College and obtained numerous advanced certifications throughout his career, including his Texas Master Peace Officer License.

I thank Police Corporal Marco Valladares for his leadership and unwavering commitment to protecting and serving others and wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF NATALIE "NIKKI" (DAMON)
O'NEILL

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the passing of a lifelong public servant, Mrs. Natalie "Nikki" (Damon) O'Neill. Mrs. O'Neill passed away on Monday, May 18,

2026, at age 90, surrounded by her close friends. She will be sincerely missed and long remembered for her humility, down-to-earth demeanor, decades of service as an elementary school teacher, and commitment as First Lady to former Governor of Connecticut William O'Neill.

Born in Leominster, Massachusetts to Alice and George Damon, Mrs. O'Neill was raised alongside her brother, George, Jr., and graduated from Leominster High School in 1954. She pursued higher education, graduating from the University of New Hampshire in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science, and continuing graduate studies at Worcester State Teacher's College, Boston University, University of Hartford, and the University of Connecticut. She met her husband, Korean War Air Force Veteran William "Bill" O'Neill, at a party in East Hampton. They married on December 1, 1962, in her hometown.

Mrs. O'Neill dedicated herself to public service, beginning her teaching career in Ashby, Massachusetts and East Hartford, Connecticut for two additional years. She continued her passion for teaching schoolchildren as a fifth-grade teacher at East Hampton Center School for 21 years. Over the years, East Hampton became their hometown. Her beloved husband, William, served as a state representative in 1966 and later became lieutenant governor to Governor Ella T. Grasso. When Governor Grasso resigned due to ill health, Bill took over to finish out her term and Nikki wholeheartedly committed herself to serve as First Lady alongside him. Although she left her years of formal teaching behind, in this new role she visited schools across the state, encouraging children to read, and attended career days, school plays, and concerts.

Her decade and a day of service as First Lady of Connecticut were marked by her consistent leadership in civic, cultural, and charitable efforts. She served on the advisory board of the Special Olympics and the Connecticut College Children's Cancer Fund, among her many other positions of leadership. She also utilized the Executive residence to patron the arts, displaying over 500 books authored by 200 Connecticut writers, displaying local artists' works, and allowing 118 charities and organizations to host events in her home.

Mrs. O'Neill's role in the success of her husband's tenure as Governor of Connecticut was irreplaceable. She believed in true loyalty and gave her full allegiance to her husband throughout and beyond his career as Governor. Her work and dedication allowed Governor O'Neill to flourish in his role. O'Neill's ten years of service as governor were characterized by protecting and expanding the rights of his constituents; he made indelible impact on the towns comprising the 2nd Congressional District. He provided additional resources for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, began the Governor's Care and Share program which involved state employees in collecting food during the holidays for those in need, and advocated for the Veteran's cemetery in Middletown. Additionally, he championed investments in Connecticut infrastructure, securing a 10-year, \$5.5 billion plan to upgrade Connecticut roads and bridges. He never forgot teachers, like his wife, and oversaw the passing of the Educational Enhancement Act, raising teacher salaries and educational standards in the state. That generational uplift of Connecticut's teach-

ing profession has paid massive dividends over the forty years, as Connecticut school children consistently rank in the highest echelon in national reading and mathematics test scores. Governor O'Neill's administration also created one of the first, pioneering prescription drug programs in the country called ConnPACE, that provided lifesaving medicines to seniors at a time when Medicare did not cover outpatient prescription drug coverage. I had the honor of being a newly elected state representative in 1989 when that groundbreaking measure passed.

After a decade in the governor's residence, Mrs. O'Neill and her husband moved back to their home in East Hampton. Governor O'Neill passed in 2007 and was buried with military honors at the Veterans Center in Middletown. Mrs. O'Neill always said she relied on her many friends to make life worth living.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. O'Neill's loss is felt by her friends and colleagues across Connecticut and beyond. Her sharp intelligence, humility, wit, and thoughtfulness will be deeply missed by all those who she impacted through her service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Nikki's life and legacy.

HONORING THE VIETNAM AND KOREAN WAR VETERANS OF ILLINOIS

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Vietnam and Korean War veterans who will travel to Washington, D.C. on May 20, 2026, with Honor Flight Chicago, a program that provides WWII, Vietnam, and Korean War veterans the opportunity to visit their memorials on The National Mall in Washington, D.C. These memorials were built to honor their courage and service to their country.

The American Veteran is one of our greatest treasures. The Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who will travel here on May 20, 2026, answered our Nation's call to service during one of its greatest times of need. From the Pacific Asian Theatre to the Korean Theater, these brave Americans risked life and limb, gave service, and sacrificed much, all while embodying what it is to be a hero. We owe them more gratitude than can ever be expressed.

I welcome these brave veterans to Washington and to their memorials. I am proud to include in the RECORD the names of these men and women for all to see, hear, and recognize, and I call on my colleagues to rise and join me in expressing gratitude.

Kenneth D. Agema, Robert D. Anderson, Dennis J. Archer, Darryl E. Backstrom, Larry C. Beall, Karl A. Berglund, Peter J. Bistolfo, William J. Bleecker, James G. Buer, Leonard Bunge, Edward J. Butler, Mario O. Candia, Michael B. Casale, Joseph D. Cecala, Sr., Daniel B. Clark, Michael A. Connelly, Thomas J. Connors, William J. Connors, Robert L. Coyer, Roger S. Dabrowski, Michael R. Del Castillo, Gerald Den Hamer, David Frank Dillman, Stephen J. Dionne, Patrick H. Dowd, Rodney H. Dowell, James B. Ferguson, Stephen H. Fleming, Jose A. Flores, Richard M. Friedman, William J. Gallagher, Jr., Carl V.