

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.

Gatto, Dennis L. Hansen, Rickey Hardy, Robert J. Harrigan, James E. Harris, Jerry Hendershott, Michael J. Higgins, Robert M. Hinton, William N. Hobday, Robert C. Holliday, Robert H. Honzik, Jeffrey C. Isenhardt, Hobie T. Jackson, Robert C. Keller, Arthur E. Kent, Harold F. Kern, James W. Keyser, Edward F. Kneip, Terry W. Knowles, Raymond J. Kolasinski, William R. Kot, Leonard Kukulka, Dennis J. Kwait, Paul T. La Falce, Donald F. Lundy, Denise M. Lynch, Wayne T. Macejak, John W. Mason, Douglas M. Massier, John A. McAndrews, Jr., William E. McCabe, Stanley J. McGraw, Terrence McLoughlin, Robert J. Mizgata, James C. Mladic, William J. Mladic, William T. Morrison, Othos E. Morrow, Richard J. Mrozinski, Jr., Steven F. Munz, Michael F. Napadow, Gary W. Nielsen, John J. Orlando, Thomas W. Osowski, George J. Palka, Joseph P. Palm, Brian A. Pate, Gregory L. Patras, William Perrill, Michael L. Pfeffer, Joseph W. Pisterzi, Trainimair C. Platte, Jr., James C. Prorok, Winston C. Rasmussen, Jack C. Rauscher, Sylvester Roach, John J. Rogan, Adrienne L. Rubinkowski, Terrence P. Ruettiger, Gerald L. Sandretto, Bruce A. Scariano, David Scariano, Donald A. Schoenfelder, Robert J. Schutte, William B. Sebrrell, Lynetta Smith, Joseph J. Sowinski, Charles W. Speake, Raymond W. Stetz, Ronald W. Stevenson, Dennis D. Story, Douglas A. Strasburg, Donald J. Tira, Joel R. Tira, Robert J. Tracy, Michael B. Troth, James J. Utz, Maximo Valdez, Peter A. Van Merkestyn, Stanley Vaughn, Gregory J. Vickner, Thomas J. Wadman, William H. Webb, Richard K. Wilken, Jerome J. Wojtena, and Thomas M. Woods.

FILIPINO VETERANS EQUITY COMPENSATION FUND

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, during the consideration of the Fiscal Year 2027 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, the House was scheduled to vote on an amendment to eliminate the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund. I opposed the proposal, and even though it was ultimately not offered, we must oppose any similar effort to do so in the future.

In 1941, more than 250,000 Filipino soldiers responded to President Roosevelt's call-to-arms in the Philippines and elsewhere and fought bravely for the U.S. and our allies during World War II. They endured the horrors of the Bataan Death March and wartime prison camps. They waged a relentless guerrilla campaign and eventually rejoined American forces that eventually returned to the Philippines. Filipino soldiers ultimately paved the way for the liberation of the Pacific and the end of the Second World War.

After sacrificing for our country, many returned home from the war only to be denied the benefits promised for their service. Because of the Rescission Acts of 1946, most Filipino World War II Veterans did not receive compensation on par with United States veterans for their service.

To help right this wrong, in 2019 Congress passed and the President signed into law legislation that created the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund. It set up one-time payments to eligible Filipino veterans who

aided American troops during World War II. Filipino veterans who were United States citizens were eligible for a one-time payment of \$15,000, and veterans who are non-citizens were eligible for a one-time payment of \$9,000.

Despite efforts to make a payment to every possible beneficiary, many Filipinos struggled to obtain the documentation needed to prove their eligibility given the many decades that passed since World War II. The federal government has held onto these funds to allow these veterans who fought for our Nation every chance possible to prove their service and receive a payment in the final years of their lives, to ease any hardships they may have and to pay off a small part of the debt owed to them for the benefits they earned, yet were taken away from them.

Rather than close this program, we should redouble our efforts to help those who struggled to obtain the document to prove their service. We must help and not again abandon these Filipino veterans, most of whom are now in their late 90s or over 100 years old.

I strongly urge all my colleagues to oppose this misguided effort.

HONORING THE GENERATIONS WHO FORGED OUR LEGACY OF FREEDOM, PUERTO RICO'S ETERNAL PLEDGE

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truth that Puerto Rico has lived for more than a century: freedom is not inherited. It is forged. Forged in sacrifice, in courage, and in the lives of men and women who answered every call this Nation made, with unmatched devotion and without hesitation. This coming Memorial Day, as our people prepare to gather at the Morovis National Cemetery under the theme "Freedom Forged by Our Heroes," I express our eternal gratitude to those who purchased our freedom with their lives, and our solemn pledge to be worthy of it.

For more than a century, Puerto Rico has sent its sons and daughters to every theater of American conflict. In World War I and World War II, tens of thousands served with distinction, carrying the flag of this Nation across every theater of war. In Korea, the 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, forged a legacy that could not be ignored: two Korean Presidential Unit Citations, more than 2,700 Purple Hearts, and the Congressional Gold Medal, authorized by this body in 2014 and formally presented in 2016. Among them stood Private First Class Fernando Luis García of Utuado, who threw himself upon an enemy grenade on September 5, 1952, so his fellow Marines could live. He became Puerto Rico's first Medal of Honor recipient. His name became a standard.

In Vietnam, Private First Class Carlos James Lozada of Caguas and Specialist Héctor Santiago-Colón of Salinas each gave their lives to save their comrades—Lozada by holding his exposed position under withering fire so his platoon could withdraw, Santiago-Colón by shielding a grenade with his body—both awarded the Medal of Honor post-

humously. Two men, two moments, one unbreakable thread of sacrifice.

That thread did not end there. Sergeant First Class Pedro A. Muñoz of Quebradillas, a Green Beret, was killed on January 2, 2005, after his Special Forces patrol encountered enemy fire in Shindand, Afghanistan. Sergeant First Class José A. Rivera of Barranquitas, an 82nd Airborne paratrooper, was killed on November 5, 2003, when his patrol came under fire in Mumuhdyah, Iraq.

And recently, Puerto Rico mourned Major Ariana G. Linse Savino—a proud daughter of Puerto Rico, a 31-year-old Air Force pilot, Chief of Current Operations of the 99th Air Refueling Squadron, killed in the line of duty on March 12, 2026, in western Iraq. Governor González Colón awarded her the Governor's Medal for Valor and Patriotism—the first time in history that honor was given posthumously. Regarding her family: Puerto Rico embraces them, and will forever carry her memory.

For generations, Puerto Rico's fallen rested at the Bayamón National Cemetery, a ground made sacred by the heroes it received. When Bayamón reached its capacity and closed to new interments, Puerto Rico did not leave its veterans without an answer. The Morovis National Cemetery rose to carry that sacred trust forward, extending the same dignity deeper into the heart of the island, closer to the communities that have given the most. Nestled in the mountains of Puerto Rico, Morovis stands as living proof that our commitment to those who serve does not expire. No hero of this island will rest forgotten, and no family will carry their grief without the full honor their loved one earned.

From the frozen hills of Korea to the skies above Iran, Puerto Rico has answered every call, in every generation, without fail.

Freedom Forged by Our Heroes is not a phrase chosen lightly. It is a truth written in sacrifice, carried across generations, and honored in Morovis, Bayamón, and all across Puerto Rico.

HONORING THE MEMORY AND SERVICE OF ERWIN J. KORCZYNSKI

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Erwin J. Korczynski of Chicago, Illinois. Erwin was a United States Marine Corps veteran, commercial airline captain, and Civil Reserve Air Fleet pilot who passed away on January 5, 2011, after a battle with prostate cancer.

Erwin Korczynski was born on March 30, 1942, and raised in Chicago, where he attended Lane Technical High School and later Northern Illinois University. During the Vietnam War, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps alongside his identical twin brother, Edwin. After their discharge, both brothers were hired by Eastern Air Lines, beginning careers that would eventually draw them into support roles during two American wars.

Through his work with Evergreen Airlines, Erwin became part of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, a partnership between the Department of Defense and the commercial aviation industry that augmented Military Airlift Command