

and retention. Her expertise in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense earned her recognition as a CBRN specialist. More significantly, she became the first woman to serve on the 22nd Civil Support Team's Weapons of Mass Destruction Survey Team in Puerto Rico, breaking new ground and opening doors for those who followed.

Elizabeth's service took her to missions across the globe—operations in the War on Terror, support at Guantanamo, and humanitarian assistance following Hurricane Katrina. She demonstrated unwavering discipline, courage, and dedication in each assignment.

Her commitment to service did not end with her military career. Elizabeth has devoted herself to advancing the veteran community and our young people through the American Legion, Department of Puerto Rico. She has served as Commander of Post 45 in Dorado, First Vice Commander of the Department, and as Chairwoman of Americanism, Conventions, Communications and Media, and our Youth Oratorical Program. Most recently, she was elected Commander of the Department of Puerto Rico for the 2026–2028 term—making her only the second woman to hold this position in the organization's 103-year history.

In this role, Elizabeth leads efforts to strengthen programs for veterans and young people across Puerto Rico, promoting civic responsibility, constitutional respect, youth leadership, discipline, athletics, education, and community service.

Throughout her journey, as a soldier, as a leader, as a voice for her community, Elizabeth has carried with her the values of Dorado and Puerto Rico. She embodies integrity, perseverance, compassion, and a profound love for our people.

I urge my colleagues and all citizens of Puerto Rico to recognize her example and celebrate her achievements as inspiration for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING THE MERCY HOUSE  
BRUNDAGE LANE NAVIGATION  
CENTER

**HON. DAVID G. VALADAO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mercy House Brundage Lane Navigation Center (BLNC) on five years of dedicated service to the Bakersfield community, providing individuals experiencing homelessness with the support and resources needed to secure stable housing and rebuild their lives.

Since opening its doors in 2021, the Brundage Lane Navigation Center has become a vital resource for some of our community's most vulnerable residents. Beyond offering hundreds of shelter beds, the center serves as a haven for the displaced to receive comprehensive services including case management, storage, transportation assistance, healthcare access, and housing support, helping people move from crisis to stability.

The center's continued growth reflects both its success and the community's commitment

to addressing homelessness. During its first major expansion in 2023, the Brundage Lane Navigation Center added onsite medical services and a Recuperative Care Dorm, helping bridge the gap between healthcare and housing. The center also provides shuttle transportation services that connect residents with essential resources and opportunities throughout Kern County.

Today, the Brundage Lane Navigation Center stands as a cornerstone of Bakersfield's homelessness response system. As Mercy House's first program in Kern County, the center has housed over 500 people while simultaneously providing a level of care and support that extends far beyond traditional shelter services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the Mercy House Brundage Lane Navigation Center's 5th anniversary. Their commitment to ensuring quality, community-focused care will continue to serve as a lifeline for Bakersfield's most vulnerable for many years to come.

HONORING THE PRINCE WILLIAM  
COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS  
VALOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

**HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the Prince William County Department of Public Safety Communications Valor Award recipients, recognizing the extraordinary dedication of those who serve as the critical first line in emergency response.

As we mark the 40th anniversary of the Valor Awards, we are proud to celebrate this tradition that has stood as the highest recognition of courage within the Department. Since inception, these awards have honored generations of first responders who answered the call when it mattered most.

Each recipient exemplifies what it means to act with valor, remaining composed under pressure, coordinating life-saving responses in real time, and providing reassurance and guidance to those facing crisis. The department facilitates the flow of information in a seamless and rapid manner, providing aid, comfort, and instructions to the public prior to the arrival of field resources. Their efforts strengthen public trust and ensure that every emergency begins with clarity, care, and swift action—fostering a safer community. Today, we recognize and celebrate their critical role and exceptional commitment to public service, often carried out behind the scenes but never without impact.

We are deeply grateful for their service and proud to honor the Prince William County Department of Public Safety Communications for their unwavering dedication to the safety and well-being of our community. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Prince William County Department of Public Safety Communications for their remarkable contributions to our community.

HONORING RAMÓN PADILLA

**HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ**

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ramón Padilla, who has concluded his service as Department Commander of The American Legion, Department of Puerto Rico, for the administrative term 2024–2026. His leadership of this historic organization reflects the finest traditions of veteran service and community commitment.

The American Legion, with more than a century of service to veterans and the people of Puerto Rico, carries with it the weight of significant responsibility. Ramón assumed that responsibility with discipline, institutional loyalty, and unwavering commitment to the Legion's mission. His leadership focused on unity, participation, and the strengthening of posts throughout the Department.

During his tenure, Ramón worked to improve the administrative standing of posts across Puerto Rico, ensuring that a significant percentage remained current and in good standing. This effort strengthened the institutional structure of the Department and enhanced its capacity to serve.

Under his administration, the Legion's signature programs flourished, Legion Baseball, the Oratorical Contest, American Legion College, Operation Honor Guard, and the second Honor Flight for veterans were all advanced during his term. These initiatives represent the Legion's commitment to youth development, veteran recognition, and service to our communities.

Beyond programmatic accomplishments, Ramón defended the rights and benefits of veterans, supported military families, and promoted patriotism grounded in service. He demonstrated that leadership in the veteran community is not about position, but about putting the needs of those who served before personal recognition.

Throughout his administrative years, Ramón embodied the values that make the American Legion vital: service, responsibility, fellowship, respect, and commitment to the principle that veterans help veterans. His willingness to serve during a period of considerable institutional responsibility made a meaningful difference in the lives of legionnaires, veterans, their families, and the communities the Legion touches.

The Department of Puerto Rico is stronger because of his leadership. The legacy he leaves behind—one of service, strengthened programs, and renewed commitment to veteran advocacy—will benefit Puerto Rico for years to come.

I urge all citizens of Puerto Rico to recognize Ramón Padilla's distinguished service and his enduring example of leadership, integrity, and devotion to those who have answered the call to serve.

HONORING WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL DURING THE CELEBRATION OF AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Watkins Glen International, one of America's most iconic motorsports venues, for its enduring contributions to our Nation's sporting heritage as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States of America.

For generations, Watkins Glen International has welcomed visitors from across the country and around the world, serving as both an economic engine for the region it serves and a source of pride for New Yorkers. Since the earliest days of road racing in Watkins Glen, The Glen has become synonymous with excellence, competition, and innovation, earning its place among the most celebrated racing facilities in North America.

As our Nation commemorates America 250, Watkins Glen International continues to bring people together through a shared appreciation for competition, tradition, and community. Beyond the excitement on the track, The Glen serves as a gathering place where families create lasting memories, local businesses thrive, and visitors experience the very best of what our region has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the United States House of Representatives join me in recognizing Watkins Glen International for its longstanding contributions to New York and our Nation, and for helping unite communities during the celebration of America's 250th anniversary. Its legacy of excellence, hospitality, and community engagement stands as a testament to the enduring American spirit.

HONORING THE PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT VALOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

**HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the Prince William County Fire & Rescue Department Valor Award recipients, recognizing the extraordinary bravery and selfless service demonstrated by the department's firefighters, paramedics, and rescue personnel. These awards reflect the courageous actions of the dedicated men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect and serve the community in its most critical moments.

As we mark the 40th anniversary of the Valor Awards, we are proud to celebrate this tradition that has stood as the highest recognition of courage within the Prince William County Fire & Rescue Department. Since inception, these awards have honored generations of first responders who answered the call when it mattered most.

Each recipient exemplifies true valor, facing danger without hesitation, providing life-saving

aid, and prioritizing the safety of others in the most challenging emergencies. This commitment to saving lives is further strengthened by the recent launch of the Fire and Rescue System's new Advanced Care Field Operations, a groundbreaking initiative that delivers blood administration directly at the scene of critical trauma emergencies.

Whether responding to fires, medical emergencies, or natural disasters, these individuals demonstrate an unyielding commitment to preserving life and property. Their professionalism and readiness in the face of uncertainty set an example for us all and serve as a reminder of the impact that first responders have on the lives of those they protect. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Prince William County Fire & Rescue team for their remarkable contributions to our community.

CONGRATULATING JORGE ANDRÉS TORRES GONZÁLEZ ON WINNING THE 2026 ORATORICAL CONTEST

**HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ**

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Jorge Andrés Torres González on winning the 2026 Oratorical Contest of The American Legion, Department of Puerto Rico. Jorge's achievement reflects the excellence, discipline, and civic commitment that define his character and promise as a young leader.

From his early years, Jorge has demonstrated exceptional qualities of responsibility, discipline, and service. Throughout his academic career, he has maintained an outstanding record, earning recognition as Student of the Year in sixth grade and graduating as Valedictorian of his eighth-grade class. He continues as an Honor Roll student at TESIS Dorado, setting a standard of academic excellence that speaks to his dedication and intellectual curiosity.

Beyond the classroom, Jorge has taken on meaningful leadership roles. He has served as Freshman Class Vice President, Historian and Secretary of the Executive Student Council, and Secretary General of the Model United Nations Club. Through these positions, he has demonstrated maturity, responsibility, and a genuine commitment to representing his peers with integrity.

Jorge has distinguished himself in debate and oratory, communicating complex ideas with clarity, respect, and critical thinking. These skills are essential to active and responsible citizenship. He has also demonstrated a profound commitment to community service, dedicating his volunteer work to supporting the elderly, recognizing in them an invaluable source of wisdom and experience.

As a member of Sons of the American Legion and a representative of American Legion Post 45 of Dorado, Jorge prepared rigorously for the Department contest, practicing faithfully each Thursday after school. His discipline and preparation paid off. He was selected as winner of the Puerto Rico Department Oratorical Contest and will now represent Puerto Rico at the national level at Hillsdale College in Michigan, an extraordinary honor for a young leader from our island.

Jorge exemplifies the values of leadership, patriotism, civic responsibility, academic excellence, community service, and respect for our Constitution. He represents the best of Puerto Rico's future: citizens who are educated, committed, and willing to serve others with purpose and integrity.

I urge all citizens of Puerto Rico to recognize Jorge's achievement and celebrate his example as inspiration for the next generation of young leaders.

HONORING MR. WILLIE ASHFORD

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2026*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mr. Willie Ashford of Jackson, Mississippi, for being named the 2026 National Waste and Recycling Association Residential Driver of the Year.

Mr. Ashford has distinguished himself by exceptional service professionalism, and dedication to the waste and recycling industry. His selection as the 2026 National Waste and Recycling Residential Driver of the Year is prestigious national honor that recognizes excellence among more than 100,000 drivers employed by waste and recycling companies across the United States.

Committed to serving the residents of Mississippi, Mr. Ashford provides essential waste collection services to approximately 6,000 homes each week in Jackson and the surrounding communities. His work plays a vital role in maintaining clean, safe, and healthy neighborhoods for thousands of Mississippi families.

In addition to his daily responsibilities, Mr. Ashford has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the workplace by serving as a top trainer for new drivers at his location. Through mentorship and hands-on instruction, he helps prepare the next generation of skilled and safety-conscious professionals, ensuring that high standards of service continue across the industry.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mr. Ashford has invested in the lives of young people by coaching youth sports in his community. As a coach and role model, he has provided guidance, encouragement, and support to countless young athletes and their families.

Mr. Ashford's success has also been strengthened by the support of his wife, Chantry Ashford, whose partnership and encouragement have contributed to his many achievements.

Mr. Speaker, today we honor Mr. Willie Ashford for his remarkable accomplishment and for being named the 2026 National Waste and Recycling Association Residential Driver of the Year.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing his outstanding service and congratulating him on this well-deserved national honor.