

He attended Groveton High School south of Alexandria, Virginia graduating in 1970. In 1974 he graduated from Grinnell College, Iowa where he obtained a bachelors of arts in American History and Political Science. From 1974 to 1975 he attended one year of graduate study in Public Administration at the University of Virginia Graduate Department of Government just before pursuing a degree in law. In 1978, he became a juris doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law. Ten years later he married his wife Mary Louise Wheeler.

Fred is also an active member in our island community. He previously served as a member of the Guam Election Commission from 1996–2000 and Chairman of the Election Commission from 2002 to 2007. He also served as the Chairman of the Legislative and Government Relations Committee. Since 1980, he has been a member in Hafa Adai Kiwanis Club of Guam as well as member of Toastmasters Club of Guam from 1983 to 1987. His corporate legal service expertise was instrumental in renaming and reorganizing the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Guam (CCCCG) enabling the CCCC to become a prominent organization on Guam. Fred also provided volunteer legal services to the Guam Association of Realtors from 2008–2010 and he currently serves as a director of the Board of Committee Chair of the Legislative Committee. He is also a licensed real estate broker and the Director of the Guam Association of Realtors.

I congratulate Frederick J. Horecky on receiving the 2013 U.S. Small Business Administration's Minority Small Business Champion Award for Guam. I join the people of Guam in commending him for his award and thanking him for his contributions to our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ESTHER PADILLA

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the life of Esther Padilla who passed away at the age of 69. Her character exemplified the very best of what our nation has to offer—she was honest, generous, and possessed a strong work ethic.

Esther grew up in Fresno, California and was the youngest of 12 children. She attended Washington Union High School and then went on to California State University, Fresno where she earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees in social work. As a young woman, Esther knew she wanted to help others and serve in her community.

Esther truly loved social work, and she served at a few different organizations. She worked for Fresno County's Department of Social Services, Fresno County Head Start, and Centro La Familia. Esther met her husband, Gilbert Padilla, while she was at a meeting for Head Start. They were married for 43 years and have one daughter, Adele.

After years of dedicating her life to social work, Esther decided to go work with Gilbert at the United Farm Workers (UFW). Her position at the UFW allowed her to become heavily involved with politics. Esther organized boy-

cotts, negotiated union contracts, and lobbied at our Nation's Capital.

The experiences she had and the knowledge she gained prepared Esther to serve on the Fresno City Council. Esther was the first and only Hispanic woman to ever be elected to the City Council. During her time on the council, Esther was passionate about improving the lives of her constituents. Making Fresno a better place was a priority of hers, and she played an integral part in getting Highways 180 and 168 built.

Beyond her service for the community, Esther will also be remembered for her advocacy of organ and tissue donation. Seventeen years ago, Adele donated a kidney to her mother. Esther understood that importance of organ donations because she was able to live almost two more decades due to the kindness of her daughter.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the life and service of Esther Padilla. She was a shining example of a true public servant and proud American.

INTRODUCING THE VETERANS PENSIONS PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Veterans Pensions Protection Act of 2013, which will help protect our nation's veterans from unfairly losing their pensions benefits because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident, theft, loss or casualty loss.

When assessing a veteran's eligibility for a pension, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers a variety of sources of revenue to determine a veteran's annual income. If such income exceeds the income limit set by the VA, the veteran does not qualify for a pension or loses their benefits. Currently, the VA considers any reimbursement that compensates a veteran for his/or her expenses due to accidents, theft or loss as income. Only reimbursements of expenses related to casualty loss are currently exempted from determination of income.

Under current law, if a veteran is seriously injured in an accident or the victim of a theft and receives insurance compensation to cover his/or her medical expenses, or the cost for pain and suffering, he or she will likely lose their pension. This means that the law effectively punishes veterans when they are involved in an accident or theft.

Such a tragedy happened to one of my constituents, a Navy veteran with muscular dystrophy who was hit by a truck when crossing the street in his wheelchair. His pension was abruptly cut-off after he received an insurance settlement payment to cover medical expenses for himself and his service dog, as well as material expenses to replace his wheelchair. As a result, he could not cover his daily expenses and mortgage payments and almost lost his home.

There is clearly something wrong with a law that cancels veterans' pensions following the award of an insurance payment, which was

only intended to cover exceptional medical expenses. I am distraught that the VA can cancel the pensions of unemployed and disabled veterans without further notice. The VA has a moral responsibility to care for our veterans and ensure that they live decent lives.

This happens, because the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers a variety of sources of revenue to determine a veteran's annual income, when assessing a veteran's eligibility for a pension, including medical expenses reimbursements/pain and suffering reimbursements. If a veteran's income exceeds the limit set by the VA, then the veteran does not qualify for a pension or loses his/or her benefits.

For this reason, the bill is being reintroduced to include language from the original bill that addresses the issue of medical expense/pain and suffering reimbursements.

The majority of the original bill, H.R. 923, was passed into legislation in the form of PL 112–154. However, while the law addresses veterans' eligibility for pensions (and surviving spouse/children) in regard to their reimbursements (for any accident, theft or loss, or casualty loss), it does not specify medical expenses or pain and suffering reimbursements.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will ensure that pensions are issued to veterans who legitimately meet the income criteria and rely on such benefits to survive. We must enact regulations that help veterans live better lives, not hurt them. At a time when our nation's servicemen and women are fighting two wars abroad, we have a duty to our past, present, and future veterans to provide them with the very best services and benefits. We owe our veterans an enormous debt, and cannot thank them enough for their service. On behalf of the unfortunate veterans who have slipped through the cracks due his punitive law, such as my aforementioned constituent, I ask for your support of this important legislation.

FRANK CURIEL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Frank Curiel for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Frank Curiel is a 12th grader at Jefferson High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Frank Curiel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Frank Curiel for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.