

HONORING MICHAEL KUNKO

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 13, 2020*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Michael Kunko for receiving the 2020 Encompass Health Rehab Award.

Following a stroke, Mike entered outpatient therapy on November 20, 2019. After seventeen days of acute care, he transferred to inpatient rehab for two and a half weeks. At the time, he had minimal use of his right arm and right leg due to significant hemiparesis, impaired vision and functionality, and short-term memory loss issues.

With the help of his positive attitude and fighting spirit, Mike persevered. He worked hard in rehab and slowly began to see improvement. He attended appointments regularly, and he continued his work at home with the help and support of his family. As a result of his hard work and dedication, I'm pleased to report that Mike now can walk without assistance—and even participate in many of the activities he enjoyed before he suffered a stroke.

Mike Kunko is a shining example of the benefits of hard work and determination. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Mike on his progress and wish him every continued success in his recovery.

HONORING DR. RICHARD RIVERA

**HON. FILEMON VELA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 13, 2020*

Mr. VELA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Richard Rivera on his well-deserved retirement from the Weslaco Independent School District. Dr. Rivera instilled his own philosophy of education throughout the local community where now many generations share and foster his ideals. He not only shaped the community as a school board member and superintendent, but also as a teacher, role model, and mentor.

Dr. Rivera's journey in education began in 1967 as a schoolteacher and coach. With every student he taught, parent he advised, and co-worker he befriended, his passion to expand and build upon the established education system grew, leading him to rise to the position of Principal at both Mary Hoge Junior High School in 1974 and Weslaco High School in 1979.

Dr. Rivera firmly believes that "education is the great equalizer," and made it his life's mission to open doors for the students of our region. To achieve his vision for the community, Dr. Rivera cultivated a nurturing and collaborative environment during his 14 years of service as the Weslaco ISD Superintendent. Dr. Rivera recognized that in order to make a positive impact on students, the educational organization and the individuals who make up the school setting are critical in enriching and growing students' knowledge and experience. As such, our region's education system underwent a phase of great transformation. Student

academic programs were expanded, school facilities were upgraded, and staff engagement was prioritized.

Dr. Rivera believed in investing in people and prioritized mentoring his employees. There are countless testimonies from Weslaco ISD Staff who credit their careers to Dr. Rivera's dedication and deep commitment to employee support programs.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Dr. Richard Rivera for his 53 years of wholehearted devotion to the students and teachers of Weslaco. Dr. Rivera has undoubtedly had an indelible impact on educators throughout our region and has made a lasting impression on our students. I commend him on a well-earned retirement and wish him the best in every future endeavor.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY  
OF ALAN LEVY**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 13, 2020*

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of my dear friend, and pillar of the South Florida community, Alan Levy. Alan called Fort Lauderdale home for more than 70 years and was the founder, Chief Executive Officer, and President of Great American Farms, a Pompano Beach-based agricultural marketing firm. He passed away on October 7, 2020, at the age of 80.

Alan was a selfless leader who served on numerous nonprofit boards and was a passionate supporter of HANDY, a nonprofit that serves at-risk youth in South Florida. He dedicated a large portion of his life to helping youth and families in our community by ensuring they had every opportunity to succeed, serving as a beacon of hope for the less fortunate.

His dedication and passion for nonprofit organizations was beyond compare. Once he was asked, if he could wave a magic wand and do two things for Broward County what would they be? Alan responded by saying he "wanted to strengthen our educational system from early childhood all the way through to universities." He continued by saying, "Seeing is believing. We can't just sit here and wait for somebody else to do it. You've got to get behind it, make the decision that you are going to make it happen, believe in it, and have a passion for its success."

Madam Speaker, Alan did just that, he supported our community, believed in all of us, and because of that unyielding passion, ensured our success and the success of generations to come. It is true that our community has lost a hero, but it is undoubtedly the case that we are better for having had Alan in our lives. I will miss him dearly. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Marsha, and his children, Eric and Hope. I pray they find comfort during this extremely difficult time. May Alan's life and legacy live on for generations to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BRAZIL'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (APIB)

**HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 13, 2020*

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Association of Brazil's Indigenous Peoples (APIB) and their internationally respected leader, Secretary General Sonia Guajajara, for receiving the prestigious Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award from the Institute for Policy Studies on October 15, 2020.

I would like to add my heartfelt congratulations for their important work in defense of the rights of Indigenous Peoples from across Brazil and protection of the many natural ecosystems that are part of Brazil's ancestral territories.

APIB and Brazil's National Indigenous Movement have raised the profile of Indigenous rights issues through impressive grassroots mobilizations, such as the annual Free Land Camp, the implementation of the Indigenous Emergency Plan to Combat COVID-19, precedent-setting legal victories before the Brazilian Supreme Court, and international advocacy among influential spaces like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations.

I share my special admiration for the powerful leadership roles played by many Indigenous women at both national and local levels, even with the imminent threats coming from the administration of President Jair Bolsonaro. Unfortunately, under President Bolsonaro's administration, there has been an increase of violent actions against Indigenous peoples, like the invasions into Indigenous lands, illegal exploitation of natural resources and other incidents, rising from 109 cases in 2018 to 256 last year. This also includes the threats against and killings of Indigenous leaders and Forest Guardians, like Emyra Wajãpi, Paulo Paulino Guajajara, and Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, among countless others.

While those situations are condemnable, I applaud the work performed by APIB during these difficult times, and as they continue to create a movement of solidarity. Since 2005, APIB's presence has been essential to strengthening and unifying Indigenous peoples' demands, politics, and rights. By building and strengthening alliances with the international Indigenous movement and other social movements, APIB is contributing to protect natural resources and promoting sustainable management of lands.

To conclude, I'd like to mention APIB Secretary General Sonia Guajajara's words: "Our lives are inextricable from the natural world. The creatures of the rainforest protect us, and in turn we protect them. We are the only buffers protecting our thinning forests. Our battle is not just for the future. It's for the present."

Thank you, APIB, for your extraordinary and essential work for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Earth.