

with the choir was recognized by (Bishop) Metropolitan Anthony Lakovos with a Gold Medallion. Vi's involvement with the choir became somewhat curtailed in 1991 when a tumor was discovered.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 2, 1999*

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 18, 1999 I was unavoidably absent from this chamber and therefore missed rollcall vote 508. I want the record to show that had I been present in this chamber I would have voted "yea" on vote 508.

I also missed rollcall vote 512 on Tuesday, October 19, 1999. I want the record to show that if I had been able to be present in this chamber when this vote was cast, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 512.

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IN HONOR OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN VETERANS

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 2, 1999*

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the Mexican-American veterans who have served the United States of America in war and peace throughout the course of our nation's history.

Hispanos fought against the British during the American Revolution. In 1779, General Bernardo de Galvez of New Orleans led an army against the British, defeating them in key battles along the Mississippi River at Baton Rouge and Pensacola, Florida. The General's army captured eight British warships and over 5,000 British soldiers. And in 1836, Mexican-Americans fought in the battle for the Lone Star State, Texas. Nine Mexican-Americans died during the Battle of the Alamo.

Historically, over 500,000 Mexican-Americans served during World War II and the Korean War. In the Vietnam War, Mexican-Americans represented 20% of the combat troops, yet were only 10% of the total population of the United States! And in April of 1999, two of the Americans who were captured and held in Kosovo as prisoners of war were Latinos, Sgt. Andrew Ramirez and Spec. Steven Gonzales.

Patriotic, heroic, and loyal to their country, Mexican-Americans have stood united against the enemies who have threatened America's freedom. Colleagues, please join me today in saluting the Mexican-American Veterans who have honored our country with their bravery and dedication.

HONORING ROBERT "RED" McKEON ON RECEIVING THE FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD FROM THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

**HON. SAM GEJDENSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 2, 1999*

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Robert "Red" McKeon on receiving the Firefighter of the Year award from the National Volunteer Fire Council. Red embodies the characteristics which make volunteer firefighters extraordinary public servants.

Red McKeon has been active in the volunteer firefighter community on the local, state, national and international levels for more than fifty years. In 1944, he joined the Occum Volunteer Fire Department in Occum, Connecticut. After serving in a number of positions, he became Chief in 1960. He served in that position for the next thirty four years. This tenure is a testament to Red's leadership skills, innovative practices and commitment to his community. Under Red's leadership, the Occum Volunteer Fire Department achieved a number of "firsts" in the State of Connecticut. Occum was the first department to have two-way radio communication equipment in fire trucks and other vehicles; the first to have a computer in the station which could provide a wide array of training to keep skills sharp; and the first department to have certified firefighters and emergency medical technicians. In 1970, Red established the Occum volunteer ambulance service to ensure that the residents of Occum and the surrounding communities could receive state-of-the-art emergency medical treatment within minutes.

Red has been a pioneer in other areas as well. He has worked for a number of years to develop a pension system for volunteer firefighters. Unlike their career counterparts, our volunteer firefighters do not receive a pension after decades of service to their communities. Red worked to establish a system in the State of Connecticut which allows communities to establish voluntary retirement programs for volunteers. Under Red's plan, communities can provide a small, but extremely crucial, amount of retirement income to men and women who have safeguarded our lives and property for decades. This is another example of Red's commitment to the volunteer firefighters of Connecticut.

Red has also served in a number of state and national volunteer firefighter organizations. He has been a member of the Connecticut State Firemen's Association since 1944 serving as its President between 1977 and 1978 and Treasurer since 1979. He has also participated in a wide array of other state-based organizations, including the Fire Chiefs' Technical Advisory Committee, Emergency Medical Advisory Committee, and the Fire Department Safety Officers Association.

On the national level, Red has been an active member of the National Volunteer Fire Council—the largest volunteer firefighter organization in the country—for many years. Between 1991 and 1994, he served as the Council's President following five years as Second

Vice President. As Vice President and President, Red worked on behalf of volunteers across the country to ensure that they received the latest firefighting and emergency medical training and were represented with a united voice at all levels of government. In this capacity, Red was a trusted advisor to Congress and the Executive branch.

Mr. Speaker, Red McKeon exemplifies the very best of volunteer firefighters across this country. Over fifty five years of active service as a volunteer firefighter, Red has worked tirelessly to modernize and strengthen volunteer fire departments in eastern Connecticut and nationwide. I commend him for receiving the Firefighter of the Year award and thank him for his service to Connecticut and the nation.

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HONORING DOCTOR VINCENT CALAMIA

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 2, 1999*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Vincent Calamia, a shining example of what physicians in this country should aspire to be.

Dr. Vincent Calamia, F.A.C.P., F.A.C.E. is the President of the largest group practice in New York City, University Physicians Group, as well as the Director of Geriatrics at Staten Island University Hospital. He also conducts a private practice in Endocrinology on Staten Island. Dr. Calamia is a Diplomat in Internal Medicine, Endocrinology, Geriatrics, and Quality Assurance. In addition, he is Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the State University of New York at Brooklyn.

Mr. Speaker, one would think with all these responsibilities that Dr. Calamia would not have time for much else in his life, but he makes a generous portion of his time available for medical humanitarian efforts. He serves on the Board of the MSO of the North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System, Board of the MSO of the Beth Israel Health System, and on the Board of the Alzheimer's Association of Staten Island. Dr. Calamia is also Vice President of the Children's Foundation of the Ukraine, which supports orphanages in the Ukraine. This coming summer with the help of Dr. Eugene Holuka and under the auspices of the Forum Club, the Foundation will be sponsoring the open-heart surgery of two children at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I would like you and my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join me in honoring Dr. Vincent Calamia.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 2, 1999*

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, September 23, 1999, I was unavoidably absent from this chamber and therefore missed rollcall vote 442. I want the record to