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HON. KATHY CASTOR
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Madam Speaker, this Black History Month, I am celebrating Tampa's health care heroes. I rise today in immense gratitude of a life of service led by Heddie Sumpter, whose contributions of her time and talents are a living example of selfless service to others. Born in 1955 in Donalsonville, GA, and raised in Detroit, MI, where her family worked in the automotive industry, Heddie moved to Tampa, FL, in the 1970s to attend the University of South Florida. She was the first of her 13 siblings to attend college. She completed her bachelor's degree in management information systems.

After a short stint back in Detroit, Ms. Sumpter returned to Tampa with her daughter in the 1980s to stay with her grandmother during her remaining years of life. Sadly, her grandmother succumbed to lung cancer in 1989, but this moment opened a new chapter in Ms. Sumpter's life and for the next 30 years she would dedicate herself to educating our African American population about preventing cancer, available resources and reducing health disparities through her tireless volunteering with the American Cancer Society.

Ms. Sumpter's work through the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network spans lobbying lawmakers in Tallahassee, FL as well as Washington, D.C.; fundraising; awareness about economic and cultural barriers to access to care and resources; and helping to ensure communities of color are included in the massive, decennial Cancer Prevention Study, which has had findings with global implications, such as establishing the link between cigarettes and the risk of lung cancer. Ms. Sumpter has been appointed to numerous committees of the American Cancer Society at the federal, state and local levels, and in 2019 she received the American Cancer Society Volunteer Leadership Award, presented to her in Dallas, TX, after a competitive nomination process. The expertise she has gained has led her to become an outspoken advocate of improved health in other areas. I will always be grateful to her for standing with me to champion the Affordable Care Act so that more Americans could have access to affordable health care, and not be discriminated against if they have a pre-existing condition. As a member of the Delta Sigma

Theta Sorority, Inc., she serves as its national liaison to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as well as March of Dimes, and has been instrumental in forging a national partnership between the Deltas and the American Cancer Society. In addition, she has served as chair for the Board of Directors for the Corporation to Develop Communities (CDC) of Tampa, Inc. and chair of the Hillsborough County Community Action Board, both which aim to lift communities.

Ms. Sumpter now works at her alma mater, the University of South Florida, where she has also dedicated more than three decades, starting at the Office of the Registrar, then at the Colleges of Engineering and Business, and now at the College of The Arts as a human resources administrator. Ms. Sumpter is an outstanding reminder that hard work and service to others always lead to progress.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the Tampa Bay community, I am proud to recognize the service and leadership of Heddie Sumpter, and her lifetime dedicated to the cause, which inspires us all.