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IN RECOGNITION OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO

HON. JACKIE SPEIER
of California
in the House of Representatives

April 27, 2022

Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring and congratulating the 7,500 members of the Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) for their legacy of excellence in the promotion of justice. BASF is rooted in the 12th and 14th Congressional Districts of California, which Speaker Pelosi and I are privileged to represent. BASF has worked tirelessly to make the law work for our communities.

BASF is the third oldest bar association in the United States and its members first met on April 27, 1872. Over the following 150 years, BASF has grown into an institution characterized by innovation, entrepreneurship, and progressive thinking. In times of social and economic turmoil in San Francisco and our nation, BASF pioneered paths that were copied by other local bar associations.

Working for greater judicial efficiency, BASF has been instrumental in improving the California Code, guiding the organization and rules of local and state courts, establishing a Code of Ethics, and helping identify competent and fair judges. Today, BASF is a highly respected voice for mediation and alternative dispute resolution, criminal justice reform, judicial independence, court funding, and equal access to justice.

BASF consistently fights for the American promise of justice for all. In the early 20th century, it was among the first bar associations to mobilize its members to support the Legal Aid Society. It then continued to create ways to help those touched by homelessness, immigration status, family turmoil, and economic

challenges. Today, the Justice & Diversity Center of BASF advances fairness and equity by providing pro bono legal services to low-income and homeless residents, and all those in times of crisis.

BASF also consistently fights for equal access to legal services. In 1946, BASF pioneered a referral service that studied cultural, political and economic realities to better identify those most in need of access to our justice system. These efforts blossomed into its Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS). Today, LRIS educates people about their legal rights and offers access to affordable and competent legal consultation and representation.

Equal opportunity in the legal profession is another priority for BASF. The bar association pioneered methods of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the 1930s, BASF began a continuing legal education program that remains in strong demand as emerging areas of law demand expertise. BASF actively helped local firms and legal agencies with hiring, retention, and promotion of those attorneys new to their legal careers, women, people of color, those who identify as LGBTQ, and people of differing physical abilities. The bar of San Francisco strives to reflect the community it serves.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in commending the Bar Association of San Francisco for its remarkable 150-year history promoting the causes of judicial efficiency, legal education, diversifying and strengthening the bar, and supporting all those who seek justice.

