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HONORING THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF NURSING

Madam Speaker, I stand, today to recognize the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)—the national voice for academic nursing – as this organization celebrates 50 years of advancing excellence in baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, promoting nursing research, and improving the health of our nation.

Since 1969, AACN has set the standards for educating the nation’s largest healthcare profession, nursing. AACN has consistently illustrated a steadfast commitment to nursing schools, deans, faculty, and students who are essential to ensuring a strong nursing workforce able to support the health and well-being of citizens in all communities throughout the country.

The rich history of AACN began with a modest but significant meeting of 44 deans of nursing who met in Detroit, Michigan in 1969 and formed the Conference of Deans of Colleges and University Schools of Nursing. At its inception, the organization—soon to be renamed the American Association of Colleges of Nursing—represented 121 member institutions. This organization had a number of visionary leaders, not only for higher education, but also for the nursing profession. AACN has provided guidance through changing social, political, and economic context and as our country weathered many changes and advancements in health care and higher education.

Over the last 50 years, AACN’s dedication to sustaining the nation’s nursing workforce has expanded and evolved with the organization now comprised of more than 825 schools of nursing representing more than 45,000 faculty members and 543,000 students. AACN’s commitment to preparing nurses with the skills needed to transform health care and improve the public’s health has had a profound impact in every state and has helped to support the nation’s healthcare infrastructure.

As the American Association of Colleges of Nursing celebrates its 50th Anniversary, I commend AACN for its leadership in educating the nursing workforce; its commitment to advancing innovation, diversity, inclusion, and research in the nursing profession; and for its dedication to driving excellence in academic nursing.