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House of Representatives

HONORING MARCH 2017 AS NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor March 2017 as National Eye Donor Month. This is a month dedicated to promoting awareness of the need to register as an eye donor, recognize donors as well as their families, and celebrate the lives of donor recipients.

Since President Ronald Regan proclaimed the first National Eye Donor Month in 1983, the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) and each of its 86 member eye banks across the U.S., have designated March to recognize over one million corneal tissue recipients who have regained their sight. In 2015 alone, EBAA member eye banks recovered 118,752 corneas from 66,065 donors and provided 74,173 corneas for transplant in the U.S. and around the world. Also in 2015, my home state of New York provided 2,835 corneas for transplant and 715 for research and education by six eye banks statewide.

Eye banks have a special significance in the 7th Congressional District of New York, the Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration (EBSR) in my district was the first eye bank in the world. Since its inception in 1944 by Dr. Townley Paton, EBSR has given the gift of sight to over 63,000 men, women and children.

On this special occasion, I commend the Eye Bank Association of America and the eye banks across the country for their great work. I encourage my colleagues to support efforts that urge all Americans to give the gift of sight by registering to become eye, organ and tissue donors.