

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### HONORING VETERANS ROGER HOPKINS AND BETSY JENKINS

#### **HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today, I want to celebrate the story of two American heroes from the Air Force and Navy who not only served the country in Afghanistan but also started a beautiful relationship. Roger Hopkins and Betsy Jenkins, two individuals who had never crossed paths, found their destinies intertwined in a remarkable twist of fate when they heard each other's voices on the radio in the heart of Afghanistan. They were both on deployment, with Betsy working for the Combined Joint Task Force, while Roger was embedded with the primary assault team for the Kunar-Nuristan when the gunfire started. Roger was on a no-fail mission, a critical operation considered highly dangerous due to the hostile environment in Afghanistan. This mission was of utmost importance, as its success was crucial for the safety and security of the region. After a successful completion, Betsy was the much needed escort out of the city, which was a daunting task given the ongoing conflict, marked by frequent enemy attacks and the constant threat of ambush. During this intense situation, Betsy's calm and composed voice, a rare sound for Roger and the Airmen, became their beacon of hope. Using the aerial views from the standard operating picture, she skillfully and bravely guided the convoy out of the city, demonstrating her exceptional leadership and tactical skills that earned the entire team's respect. Betsy's female voice of calm was not something that Roger and the Airmen were used to, and Roger became determined to figure out who this voice was. In a display of true warrior spirit, Roger, determined to find the hero who led them out, used every means at his disposal, including an Afghan translator, to track down Master Chief Betsy Jenkins of the United States Navy, a testament to his unwavering commitment and deep admiration for her. Roger used his charm to ask Betsy what she missed most other than her family, which she responded with, "mangos and avocados." In almost unheard-of fashion, Roger delivered her mangos and avocados in less than a week. This was the beginning of their relationship and as Betsy would say, showed her "without a doubt, Roger saw no obstacles, only opportunities." Roger and Betsy have dedicated much of their lives to serving their country, often at great personal sacrifice, and have enjoyed outstanding military careers. Roger retired as Master Sergeant, having served as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Special Operations Command of the Pacific's Medical Directorate, providing unconventional Special Forces mission support. His career was marked by numerous commendations and successful missions, a testament to his dedication and bravery. He also served at the Pentagon and, after September 11th, re-

trained as a part of special operations command as a Para-rescue man and subsequently did a total of nine combat deployments across three countries in 23 years of service. Betsy has been in the United States Navy for 23 years, with her first 12 serving U.S. Naval forces in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Greece, New Caledonia, and other countries before deploying to Afghanistan in 2014. She is currently supporting NAVIFORES as the Information Systems Technician Rating Advisor. Her awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, three Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, as well as many others. She and Roger have seven beautiful children they are raising in our great Nation, and I am sure they will learn from their parents' excellent leadership and service. God bless Roger and Betsy, and God bless our United States of America.

### HONORING CHIEF DARREN PYTEL

#### **HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Police Chief Darren Pytel, upon his retirement after 41 years of service to our Davis community. Chief Pytel's career exemplifies commitment to community, service, and excellence, and his legacy in Davis will continue to inspire future generations.

Chief Pytel grew up in Davis, choosing to remain in his hometown, where he would ultimately dedicate his life's work to enhancing public safety and community trust. Chief Pytel earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice at Sacramento State University, and later a Juris Doctorate at Lincoln Law School.

Chief Pytel began his career as a police cadet in 1983 and advanced through nearly every rank within the Davis Police Department. He served as a bike enforcement officer, police officer, sergeant/watch commander, lieutenant, and Assistant Police Chief before being named Police Chief in 2015. His leadership has guided the department through some of its most challenging moments, including the tragic loss of Police Officer Natalie Corona, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the spring 2023 homicides.

Throughout his tenure, Chief Pytel led the Davis Police Department with a focus on progressive policing, building trust, and fostering partnerships with the community. In recognition of Chief Pytel's innovative approach to policing, he received the Multi-Cultural Community Council Administration of Justice Award for establishing the Alternative Conflict Resolution process, which allows for peaceful conflict mediation and community-based resolution.

Chief Pytel has also served as an educator, teaching aspiring public safety professionals in Sacramento City College's Administration of Justice Department since 2007. After his re-

tirement from the police department, Chief Pytel will continue his teaching role at the college while residing in Fair Oaks with his wife, Melissa. Together, they look forward to spending more time with their four children and five grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, we honor Chief Darren Pytel today for his service, his commitment to our Davis community, and the integrity with which he led the Davis Police Department. His career and leadership have left an indelible mark on our community, and his contributions will continue to benefit our city of Davis for years to come. It is truly fitting and proper that we recognize Chief Pytel's legacy here today.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### **HON. PAUL A. GOSAR**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, on November 14, 2024, I missed vote No. 462, on passage of the Critical Mineral Consistency Act of 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 462.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### **HON. GARRET GRAVES**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 466.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### **HON. TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on November 12, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 456; and NAY on Roll Call No. 457.

### MOURNING THE LOSS OF DON VALPREDO

#### **HON. VINCE FONG**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of my friend Donald John Valpredo, a respected member of our community and a pillar of modern agriculture.

Mr. Valpredo passed away on October 31, 2024, at the age of 85, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of leadership, determination,

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

and family pride. Whether through the many companies he founded and managed or as a respected horseman, Don's loss is deeply felt by all who knew him.

Born on January 5, 1939, to Jeanne and John Valpredo of Mettler, California, Don inherited a proud Italian heritage, fitting his later affectionate moniker of "The Don" or "El Don." His father had likely been the first pioneer to drill deep enough to find water in the Mettler area and the Valpredos established their roots there. After Don graduated from Garces Memorial High School, he then attended the University of California, Davis, where he graduated with a degree in Agronomy. He then went to serve our country in the U.S. Coast Guard, which, coupled with its premier academic training, provided a firm foundation to become a true visionary of agricultural excellence in Kern County.

Returning to Mettler after his service, Don partnered with his father, John, in farming. Don was gifted and soon found himself serving in a variety of executive roles. He served as President of Ridge Ginning Company and became an aggressive entrepreneur by founding Kern Ridge Growers, Val-Mar Farms, Bako Sweet, and Country Sweet Produce, among other companies. As a mark of the prevailing Valpredo family legacy, Don's son, Michael, was also a founder of Country Sweet Produce and continues to serve as its President. Under Don's leadership, his farms have grown to now produce over 20 crops year-round across thousands of acres. His businesses today are marked by innovations like water conservation, recycling, and employee co-ownership.

Nor can we forget Don's lifelong passion for horses, which adhered to him after the first horse he bred won her first race. Don's leadership within the horseracing industry shaped the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA). Don served as CTBA President four times and once as chairman. In 2017, Don was inducted into the CTBA Hall of Fame for his forty years dedicated to building the sport and the California Cup Sprint. His work in helping to establish the California Cup Sprint—which was later renamed in his honor and is held at Santa Anita Park every January—stands as a lasting tribute to his leadership in developing this industry and racing community in California. Don served as a Commissioner and Vice-Chairman of the California Horse Racing Board, director of the Thoroughbred Owners of California for thirteen years, and served on the board of directors of the Breeders' Cup. Yet Don was not only a leader in equine associations, but also a winner of competitions. Don's 'Soviet Problem' won Calbred Horse of the Year in 1994, and he would always look back fondly on his time with that special steed.

Don is survived by his wife Sally, son Michael, daughters Natalia Fritz and Alexis Mensely, and seven grandchildren. Amanda and I send our condolences to this incredible family who have lost a great patriarch and leader.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me as we celebrate Don Valpredo's amazing life and legacy. From the fields of Mettler to the racetrack at Santa Anita Park, Don Valpredo will be dearly missed.

SUPPORTING H.R. 8371, ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST CENTURY VETERANS HEALTHCARE AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. CONNOLY. Mr. Speaker, every day, we lose an average of 17 veterans to suicide. This statistic is not just a number; it represents real lives, families, and communities torn apart by tragedy. Behind each of these 17 daily losses is a story of service, sacrifice, and struggle. These are our neighbors, friends, and family members who have worn the uniform with pride and honor. They are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, whose absence leaves an irreplaceable void in countless lives. The ripple effect of each suicide extends far beyond the individual, impacting spouses, children, parents, friends, and fellow veterans. It creates a cycle of grief and trauma that can persist for generations.

As members of Congress, it is our responsibility to address this heartbreak reality with the urgency and dedication it demands. Answering the call of duty to our veterans, I was proud to work with Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman JON TESTER to put forward H.R. 4157, Not Just a Number Act, legislation included in this Veterans omnibus package as Section 149 that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand its scope when studying veteran suicide data. Instead of focusing solely on VA health care utilization, this bill mandates a more holistic approach, considering factors such as education, job training, housing, and other relevant socio-economic factors. By broadening our perspective, we aim to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex, interconnected factors that contribute to veteran suicide. This approach will paint a more accurate picture of the multifaceted challenges our veterans face, enabling us to develop more effective support systems and interventions.

While the Not Just a Number Act is a crucial step forward, we must recognize that addressing veteran suicide is an ongoing commitment. This bill lays the foundation for a more comprehensive understanding, but our work will not end with its passage. We must be prepared to adapt our strategies based on the insights gained and continuously improve our support systems. This is merely the beginning of a long-term mission to safeguard the lives and well-being of our veterans.

We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude that can never truly be repaid. It is our responsibility to ensure that they feel our unwavering support and appreciation every single day. Let us honor our troops not just in words, but in our actions, by standing alongside them and their families. Together, let us ensure that they feel the depth of our appreciation and support at every step of their journey. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this critical legislation. By passing the Not Just a Number Act as Section 149 of the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, we demonstrate our commitment to those who have served our nation and do everything in our power to prevent veteran suicide. If you or a veteran you know is in crisis, please call the Veterans Cri-

sis Line at 988 and Press 1, or text 838255. Help is available 24/7, and you don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect with caring, qualified responders.

RECOGNIZING BERT V. MASSEY II

**HON. AUGUST PFLUGER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the passing of former Mayor Bert Massey of Brownwood, Texas on November 13, 2024. Mr. Massey was born in Brownwood on October 3, 1943, and he was a pillar of leadership in his community throughout his life. Mayor Massey graduated from Brownwood High School and went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas in August 1967, followed by a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Texas School of Law in January 1969. He served on the District Court for the Northern District of Texas and the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Massey served on the city council from 1978 to 1984 and as Mayor of the City of Brownwood from 1984 to May 2010, while practicing law as a partner for Massey & West. As the longest-serving Mayor, Mr. Massey was instrumental in countless public infrastructure and quality-of-life projects. Among these are the renovations of the Depot Civic and Cultural Center, the construction of the Martin & Francis Lehnis Railroad Museum, the relocation of City Hall to Center Ave., the construction of the Joint Law Enforcement Center, the relocation of the Senior Citizens Center, the construction of the Bert V. Massey II Sports Complex and the Camp Bowie Family Aquatic Center.

Along with his years of service to his community, Mayor Massey was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He was known for his wealth of knowledge, engaging stories about his beloved community and his warm smile. Mayor Massey's dedication to the Brownwood area and love for his family will be deeply missed by all. I am proud to honor Mayor Massey's many incredible contributions to the City of Brownwood, and I extend my deepest condolences to his family and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

NORTHFIELD FIRE COMPANY'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate the Northfield Volunteer Fire Company on its 100th anniversary, marking a century of exceptional service. Over the years, many dedicated firefighters have been part of this outstanding department, with several serving for over 50 years. A few of their veterans recall their involvement in negotiating a deal in 1968 for land on Burton Avenue, where the current firehouse and training area are located. Times were different back then, as firefighters responded to calls in the 1960s and '70s with gear that was assigned on a "first

come, first served" basis. Despite these challenges, these brave men always answered the call and served their community valiantly. Today, the fire department has expanded and ensures that their firefighters have all the necessary gear, enhancing their reliability in Northfield. Recently, the department dedicated its new fire truck, Ladder 63, in honor of Jake Eggie and Robert Leeds, both of whom dedicated 50 years of service to the community. Fire Captain Flaherty and Chief Cummings have emphasized that you cannot celebrate 100 years without remembering those who made this achievement possible. Congratulations on 100 years of exemplary service. God bless the Northfield Volunteer Fire Company, and God bless our United States of America.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. ZOE LOFGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call Vote No. 465 on H.R. 8932, the FAFSA Deadline Act, I mistakenly pushed the wrong vote button. I intended to vote Aye and I support the bill.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes on November 14, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 461; NAY on Roll Call No. 462; YEA on Roll Call No. 463; and NAY on Roll Call No. 464.

I was absent from votes on November 15, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 465.

I was absent from votes on November 18, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 466; and YEA on Roll Call No. 467.

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RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF CORAL SPRINGS, FLORIDA CITY MANAGER, FRANK BABINEC

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**HON. JARED MOSKOWITZ**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the 30 years of dedicated public service of Mr. Frank Babinec, the City Manager for Coral Springs, Florida. Over the years, Frank has displayed an unwavering commitment to the community's safety, well-being, and prosperity.

Frank's journey in public service began as a volunteer in 1993 when he joined what is now known as the Coral Springs-Parkland Fire Department, putting his life on the line to protect others. His hard work and dedication led him to be appointed to Fire Chief in 2014. His commitment to public safety went beyond fire-

fighting. He championed emergency medical services and advanced training programs and strengthened partnerships with other public safety organizations, raising the department's standards and response capabilities.

In his role as Fire Chief, Frank supported the community through a tragic shooting that took place at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018. His leadership in the aftermath demonstrated his ability to provide calm and competent direction in times of crisis, encouraging a sense of resilience and unity within the community.

In 2019, Frank was appointed City Manager of Coral Springs. He has guided the city through unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and focused his commitment to the city's health and economic stability. Over the years, Frank has worked tirelessly to promote sustainable growth, improve city services, and address the needs of residents while fostering transparency and accountability in local government. During his distinguished career, he has earned numerous accolades and awards through his service over the last 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Frank Babinec's invaluable contributions to the City of Coral Springs and his exemplary public service career. Frank's legacy in Coral Springs is one of compassion, strength, and deep commitment to serving others. I wish him all the best in his retirement.

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RECOGNIZING HAROLD HIRSCH FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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**HON. JASON SMITH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, with Ranking Member NEAL, to commend Harold Hirsch on his service to the United States Congress for over 47 years. Mr. Hirsch served as a lawyer and tax expert on the staff of the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation of the United States Congress from the beginning of 1977 to October, 2024, when he retired. Prior to 1977, Mr. Hirsch had worked as a lawyer for the office of the Judge Advocate General and for the Legislation and Regulations section at the Internal Revenue Service, government service for which we also thank him.

The staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation performs useful or at times indispensable functions to Members of Congress as the Legislative Branch develops tax policy. Mr. Hirsch's legal acumen, drafting brilliance, and deep understanding of tax issues contributed to the quality of tax legislation in numerous tax bills over the period he served on the JCT staff. Though reserved, even self-effacing, Mr. Hirsch brought thoughtful commentary to the development of proposed tax legislation. He gave an extremely careful reading of proposed legislative text, and his keen eye for possible statutory errors averted problems that would otherwise have plagued taxpayers, practitioners, and government administrators alike. Mr. Hirsch's technical skills and expertise in the craft of helping Congress produce the best statutory representation of Members' intent

redounded to the benefit of the American taxpayer.

This dedicated work should not go unknown and unrecognized. I thank Mr. Hirsch for his service in the field of tax legislation.

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HONORING THE LIFE OF BERNARD MARCUS

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**HON. STEVE SCALISE**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Bernard 'Bernie' Marcus and his many contributions to our great nation.

Bernie was not only the co-founder of The Home Depot; he was also a self-made man, born to an immigrant family, who on many occasions turned adversity into opportunity.

He earned his degree from Rutgers University where he enrolled in pharmacy school. He went on to work in both the manufacturing and retail industries before becoming Chairman of the Board and President of Handy Dan Improvement Centers in 1972.

At age 49, Bernie, alongside his friend Arthur Blank, sought to bring to life a "vision of a one-stop shop for do-it-yourselfers"—The Home Depot. The pair opened the first two Home Depot stores in Atlanta, Georgia in 1979. Today, there are over 2,300 stores worldwide.

Despite all of his success, Bernie remained humble and always sought to live up to his mother's approach of "the more you give, the more you get."

His generosity to numerous charities undoubtedly helped so many throughout his lifetime. He supported causes like helping Jewish communities, our military veterans, and children with autism, just to name a few. He also started the Homer Fund to help The Home Depot associates who fell on hard times.

He built The Home Depot with the core values of giving back, excellent customer service, entrepreneurial spirit, respect for all, and doing the right thing according to their website. These values hold extra meaning for me as well.

When I was working my way through college at LSU to become the first in my family to earn a degree, I worked as a Home Depot associate and experienced firsthand the embodiment of these values. They still hold true for me today as they did back then.

Bernie truly believed in giving back, and his legacy of generosity and philanthropy will outlive him in the lives of people he has touched.

Bernie helped create a "nation of doers" and our world is certainly a better place because of him.

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF SERGEANT ARTHUR O. MCNITZKY

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**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor U.S. Army Sergeant Arthur Othello McNitzky. Arthur was the first Denton County soldier to die in combat in World War I. His

call to service and sacrifice made a lasting impact on multiple generations.

McNitzky was raised in Denton, Texas and answered the Nation's call to service, enlisting in the U.S. Army on June 30, 1917. He was listed as a Private in Company M, 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, U.S. Army. After enlisting, McNitzky was sent for training to Camp Bowie in Fort Worth.

McNitzky was killed in action during the Battle of Argonne Forest in St. Etienne, France. The Battle of the Argonne Forest, also known as the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, is recognized as a major part of the final Allied offensive of World War I. The Battle of Argonne Forest was hard fought over an agonizing 47 days, from September 26, 1918 until November 11, 1918.

For his valiant service in action, Sergeant McNitzky was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government. His mother, Emma McNitzky, and her daughter, Rosa, traveled to France to claim Arthur's body and bring his remains home. He was buried beside his father, August McNitzky, and shares a headstone with him in the McNitzky family plot in the I.O.O.F. Cemetery in Denton, Texas.

Sergeant McNitzky's selfless sacrifice is to be respectfully reflected upon and remembered more than one hundred years later. We are forever grateful to the many men and women who have served and continue to serve in our nation's armed forces.

On Veterans Day 2024, Judge Forrest C. Beadle, Denton County Criminal Court No. 3, and Commander of American Legion Post 71, presented me with a United States flag that had been planted at Sergeant McNitzky's gravesite. The label reads "SGT Arthur O. McNitzky The American Legion, Post 71 Denton, Texas Remembrance Day October 8, 1918–October 8, 2018". STILL SERVING. It is my honor to recognize Sergeant McNitzky's sacrifice and the continuing service of Denton's Post 71, in honor of Sergeant McNitzky, with donation of this special American flag to the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, on November 18, 2024, I was not recorded on Roll Call vote No. 466.

Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on Roll Call vote No. 466.

RECOGNIZING THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS FLORIDA EAST COAST AND THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS INSTITUTE (ABCI) DURING NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

##### HON. JARED MOSKOWITZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Associated Builders & Con-

tractors Florida East Coast and the Associated Builders & Contractors Institute (ABCI), which are both based in my District and provide not only my constituents but all of South Florida, the Treasure Coast, and some of the Space Coast with construction workforce. This week is National Apprenticeship Week, and recently, I had the opportunity to visit ABC Florida East Coast and ABCI to see first-hand the apprenticeship education program provided to my constituents in seven high-demand fields in construction.

ABCI is Florida's single largest apprenticeship provider out of hundreds of apprenticeship programs. More than 800 students are enrolled at ABCI, benefiting from state laws that keep education tuition-free and guarantee progressive wages. ABCI provides robust job placement services, helping students secure employment before completion and during their education journeys.

ABCI programs are accredited by the National Center for Construction Education and Research, ensuring apprentices graduate with credentials recognized nationwide. Today in South Florida, there is much growth in population and commercial construction; the industry-driven curriculum is critical and is designed in collaboration with top industry leaders, so therefore, ABCI's programs meet the ever-evolving needs of the construction sector, producing highly skilled, growth-ready graduates.

As we commemorate National Apprenticeship Week, I'd like to once again recognize the Associated Builders & Contractors and ABCI for the positive impact apprentices have on the South Florida and American economies. ABCI's role in preparing the next generation of skilled workers is a testament to that success.

#### CUMBERLAND COUNTY TECH AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

##### HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to address the next generation of American leaders from the AP United States Government and Politics class at Cumberland County Tech. Today, I stand before them as their Representative in the United States Congress, and I want to thank them for their decision to take a college-level course that deepens their understanding of American government and politics. Learning civics is an important step toward becoming informed citizens and future leaders of our nation. It is essential for people to understand how laws are made, to participate in the political process, and to know their rights in order to make a positive impact on their community and country. The House of Representatives, where I serve, is one of the two chambers of Congress that form the federal government's legislative branch. This branch plays a crucial role in creating laws, declaring war, and overseeing the Executive Branch. By understanding how this process works, they enhance their ability to become our country's next leaders and to make meaningful contributions as outstanding Americans. I thank them for taking this important first step toward making a significant difference. God bless Cumberland County Tech, and God bless our United States of America.

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DAY 2024

##### HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 11th Anniversary of Women's Entrepreneurship Day, celebrated globally on November 19.

In the United States alone, over 12 million of our nation's 33.1 million small businesses are owned by women, employing around 10.7 million workers and contributing an astounding \$2.1 trillion in revenue. These women-led businesses are a cornerstone of our economy, and I extend my deepest commendation to the women behind them.

Today, I celebrate the Women's Entrepreneurship Day movement, founded by Wendy Diamond. Eleven years ago, Wendy launched the Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organization (WEDO) with an unyielding commitment to elevate and empower women in entrepreneurship—at a time when their vital role in the global economy was still underappreciated. Since its inception, WEDO has led transformative initiatives, including providing microloans to over 20,000 women in need, launching the WEDO Entrepreneurial Arts Education Program for disadvantaged female students, and sponsoring those students to attend the United Nations. WEDO has also been instrumental in supporting the Restart Academy, which serves students ages 13 to 21 in transitional environments, and leading the "Women's Disability Startup Cohort," the first Accelerator Program for disabled women in business—supported by Google for Startups. This past year, WEDO launched a groundbreaking AI education program with world-renowned experts, aimed at empowering 1 million disadvantaged women entrepreneurs with cutting-edge skills. To date, 55,322 women have already enrolled in this transformative program.

WEDO has also partnered with Defy Ventures to drive the Entrepreneurs in Training (EIT) program, achieving an outstanding 84 percent success rate among formerly incarcerated women by providing them with a path to opportunity and reintegration. Over the past decade, WEDO has ignited a global movement with over 300 ambassadors across 144 countries, impacting 112 international universities and colleges.

In recognition of this extraordinary milestone, the Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organization Pioneer Awards honor exceptional women leaders who have pioneered new frontiers across various fields. This year's honorees include Reta Jo Lewis, President and Chair of the Export-Import Bank of the United States; Marilyn Simons, Co-Founder and Board Chair of the Simons Foundation; Suneera Madhani, Founder & CEO of Worth AI and CEO School, and Founder of Stax Payments; Tina Nova, Co-Founder of Genoptix Medical Laboratory; Angeline Mikiri, Founder of Rock Solid Trust and Shekinah Media; María del Rosario Velasco Lino, Founder & General Director of the Sanctuary of the Queen Bee; Tanis Jorge, Founder of the Cofounder's Hub and Co-Founder of Trulioo.com; and Helena Christensen, supermodel, former Victoria's Secret Angel,

UNHCR Global Ambassador, and original Creative Director of Nylon magazine.

As we celebrate this profound milestone, let us be resolute in our commitment to providing the essential tools and programs needed for young women to not only survive but to truly flourish in the dynamic world of entrepreneurship.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. DEAN PHILLIPS**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I inadvertently voted NAY on Roll Call No. 458. I intended to vote YEA. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 458.

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CONGRATULATING IAN NOEL MERRIMAN AND JEREMY PAUL YOAKAM FOR EARNING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

**HON. RYAN K. ZINKE**

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor two exceptional young men from Livingston, Montana, Ian Noel Merriman and Jeremy Paul Yoakam, for their remarkable achievements and dedication to the principles of Scouting. Their commitment to service, leadership, and community exemplifies the values that Scouting instills in young men.

Growing up in Whitefish, Montana, the outdoor and survival skills that I learned, as well as the friends I made as a Boy Scout have stayed with me to this day. The Eagle Scout Oath to do my best to God, to my country, and to scout law is something that set me on the right track to serve my country as a SEAL and as Member of Congress. These two young men have lived up to that oath and deserve the honor and recognition that comes with the Eagle Scout title.

Ian, a senior at Park High School, began his Scouting journey in the Cub Scouts in 2013. He achieved the rank of Webelo Scout and earned the Arrow of Light, the highest rank in Cub Scouting, in 2018. Transitioning to Boy Scouts in May 2018, Ian has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication.

Ian has participated in numerous community service projects, including annual “Scouting for Food” drives, Yellowstone River Cleanups, and serving veterans at the American Legion Post No. 23 Veterans Day dinner. His involvement in activities such as erecting and taking down flags in Sacajawea Park and local cemeteries on significant patriotic holidays underscores his commitment to community service.

For his Eagle Scout Project, Ian raised funds to purchase and install two bicycle repair stations on local bike trails, benefiting the Livingston Bicycle Club and the community. Ian’s perseverance, positive attitude, and compassion for younger Scouts are truly inspiring.

Jeremy Paul Yoakam, a senior who splits his education between homeschooling and the

Learning Bench Academy, also embarked on his Scouting journey in 2013. Achieving the Arrow of Light in 2018, Jeremy joined Boy Scouts in May 2018 and has since been an active and influential member of his troop. His service projects display dedication to community improvement, including food drives, river clean-ups, and veterans’ support.

Jeremy’s Eagle Scout Project involved building two flag collection boxes for the community to appropriately dispose of worn flags. This project honors the American flag and those who have served, and it highlights Jeremy’s innovative thinking and commitment to service.

To go along with his excellent academic achievement, Jeremy balances his Scouting activities with a rich array of extracurricular pursuits, including church youth group, jiu-jitsu, backpacking, hunting, fly-fishing, and shooting sports. His work at Woodland Ridge Tiny Home Crafters speaks to his industrious nature and varied interests.

Mr. Speaker, the dedication and achievements of Ian Noel Merriman and Jeremy Paul Yoakam are commendable. Their contributions to their community and Scouting exemplify the best of our young citizens. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring these outstanding young men for their exemplary service and leadership.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JIM JORDAN**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House during yesterday’s two roll call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of both H.R. 8371 (Roll Call No. 466) and H.R. 5658 (Roll Call No. 467).

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HONORING TERRY LINDLEY

**HON. JARED HUFFMAN**

OF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague Congressman MIKE THOMPSON to honor Terry Lindley in celebration of his retirement after thirty years of service on the Sonoma County Junior College District Board of Trustees. We commend his outstanding service to the students and faculty of the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC).

Raised on a family ranch in Humboldt County, Mr. Lindley developed an appreciation for farming at an early age. While attending Ferndale High School, Mr. Lindley met Steve Olson, his then agriculture teacher who went on to become a lifelong friend and mentor. His counsel and guidance steered Mr. Lindley to embark on a distinguished career focusing on community leadership and agriculture. After graduating high school in 1976, Mr. Lindley began studying agribusiness at SRJC.

After earning his degree, Mr. Lindley was hired as a loan officer and appraiser at American AgCredit. Over the course of forty years with the company, Mr. Lindley’s knowledge of agribusiness helped him achieve increasingly

prominent roles, including senior vice president and chief marketing officer. Mr. Lindley’s aptitude for hard work, deep understanding of agriculture and business acumen made him a remarkable pioneer in the agribusiness industry. Through his leadership, American AgCredit established the first marketing department in all of the Farm Credit System.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Mr. Lindley has made many enduring and positive impacts on the community during his decades of public service. For thirty years. Mr. Lindley has been a trustee of Sonoma County Junior College District, which oversees SRJC, during which he has demonstrated his incredible commitment to providing high-quality education to generations of students throughout our community in the North Bay. While he will be greatly missed in his retirement, Mr. Lindley’s enduring legacy will be remembered through the newly opened Lindley Center for STEM Education at SRJC. This new lecture and lab hall provides state-of-the-art facilities for hands-on learning in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines.

Mr. Lindley’s leadership in agriculture and agribusiness education has not gone unnoticed by our community leaders. He has been awarded numerous accolades in recognition of his service including the SRJC’s President’s Medallion, the 4-H Foundation’s Shining Star Award, the Spirit of Sonoma County Award, and Sonoma County’s North Bay Rancher of the Year award.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that Mr. Lindley has been an excellent steward of Santa Rosa Junior College and a dedicated community member of Sonoma County’s agricultural community. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

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REMEMBERING WILLIAM JOHN  
“WILL” OSTERTAG

**HON. MARCY KAPTRU**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Ms. KAPTRU. Mr. Speaker, William ‘Will’ John Ostertag was born on March 2, 1996, to parents Stephanie Clemans and Jack Ostertag. He was a chubby baby with the biggest head anyone had ever seen, covered in bright orange hair. Will passed away November 14, 2024, from a sudden cardiac arrest. He was 28 years old. Heartbroken isn’t a big enough word.

Will grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, where he attended St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School and St. Xavier High School. When Will was two, his brother Thomas came onto the scene. They fought like only siblings that close in age know how to. They supported each other in the same way.

Will was a shy but smiley toddler. He grew into a handsome, confident, and—to his nerdy family’s surprise—exceedingly popular high schooler. He was a great tennis player, an Eagle Scout, a UK basketball superfan, and the host of more than a few unauthorized house parties.

After graduating from Miami University, Will spent two years in Indianapolis with the Teach for America program. He earned his master’s degree in education while teaching math at a

middle school sorely in need of smart and caring educators. Mr. Ostertag stayed late coaching basketball and track and was a regular feature in the kids' TikToks. In his first year, test scores skyrocketed, with 90% of his students far surpassing the school's average.

Will thought the point of life was to help people. From campaigning with the Montana Democratic Party to working on Capitol Hill, he pursued a better future. Most recently, Will worked as an Investment Strategy Analyst with the Department of Energy. Coworkers say Will's ability to create meaningful relationships with all kinds of people helped send more than \$10 billion toward clean energy initiatives.

On Halloween night 2021, Will met a girl at a party. He texted a friend that she was "perfect." Will had always been exceptionally bright, so he knew that this girl was way out of his league. He would have been delighted to know that Zehra was talking to friends too, saying Will was the funniest person she had ever met. At 25, Will had found what some people go their whole lives without—he had fallen in love and was overjoyed to be loved just as deeply in return.

Will would have wanted us to thank Andy Samberg, the other members of The Lonely Island, and the cast and crew of "Hot Rod," for creating the building blocks for his sense of humor and, possibly, his entire personality. Will routinely made friends and family cry from laughter. When he laughed, which was often and easily, he threw his entire head back. He was an enthusiastic and surprisingly coordinated dancer. He checked in on the people he cared about, celebrated others' accomplishments, and always remembered birthdays. His biggest dream was to be a dad—he would have been an amazing one.

Because Will chose to be an organ donor, he will save lives. The people who know him, know this is fitting. Will's family would like to thank the bystanders who tried to save Will's life and all of those who cared for him at MedStar Washington Hospital.

Will is survived by his partner, Zehra Khan; his parents, Stephanie Clemans (Mark French) and Jack Ostertag (Lisa Atwell Tong); his brother, Thomas Ostertag (Kelly Ostertag); stepsisters, Elizabeth and Savanna Tong; his grandmother, Nancy Sandman Ostertag; and many loving aunts, uncles, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Judy Clemans, Joseph Clemans, and Jerome 'Jerry' William Ostertag.

Will will be remembered most for the way he made people feel—light and fun, seen and supported, optimistic, engaged, and cared for. Will spent most of his days thinking seriously and meaningfully about how to make this world a betterplace. Unfortunately—incomprehensibly—that task now falls to those who loved him. We'll try to do our best.

We will be celebrating Will's life on Saturday, November 23. A visitation will be held at Highlands Funeral Home, 3331 Taylorsville Road, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, followed by a funeral service at St. Francis of Assisi at 6:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, please donate to one of the following organizations:

The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, a DC organization providing comprehensive legal services to those struggling with homelessness: 1200 U Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, <https://www.legalclinic.org/donate/>.

Jacob's Ladder, a Louisville organization providing community and support to people experiencing homelessness: Jacob's Ladder Outreach, P.O. Box 344, Mount Washington, KY 40047, <https://www.jacobsladderlouisville.com/donate>.

Horizons at St. Richard's, an Indianapolis program advancing educational equity in the same community where Will taught middle school math: 33 East 33rd Street, Indianapolis, IN 26205, <https://www.horizonsindy.org/donate>.

The family also asks that all who read this become CPR or BLS-certified.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. ANTHONY D'ESPITO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. D'ESPITO. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to participate in voting on the passage of H.R. 8371. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 466.

#### HONORING LEON GARCIA

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Leon Garcia, as we celebrate his retirement as American Canyon's longest serving mayor.

After moving to American Canyon in 2000, Mr. Garcia quickly began his career in public service. In 2002, he was sworn in as a city council member, marking the beginning of his service to the community. Following his council term, Mr. Garcia made history as American Canyon's first elected mayor. Known affectionately by his team as the 'listener-in-chief,' Mr. Garcia's attentive approach earned him nineteen years in the mayor's office.

As mayor, Mr. Garcia earned his resident's trust by putting them first. He promoted healthy growth and expansion measures including overseeing the expansion of hundreds of new homes, ushering in warehouses in industrial areas, and supporting the Watson Ranch wetland's trail access initiatives. Mr. Garcia has been a strong advocate for the City's Broadway District Specific Plan since 2017. This project is designed to transform Highway 29 from an auto-oriented commercial area into a multimodal town center.

Beyond his mayoral duties, Mr. Garcia's dedication to service extends to numerous organizations at local, regional and statewide levels. He's been an active member of Napa Valley Waste Management Authority, Napa County Flood and Water Conservation District, American Canyon Community & Parks Foundation, Napa Valley Transportation Authority, Napa County League of Governments, Association of Bay Area Governments, the League of California Cities North Bay Division, and the Napa Climate Action Committee. He has also served on the board of important not-for-profits organizations such as the Napa County Hispanic Network and Community Action of Napa Valley.

In his professional career, Mr. Garcia was a registered nurse for thirty-four years: twenty-seven at Napa State Hospital and seven at Yountville Veterans Home. Mr. Garcia is also a family man. He's proud of his large, blended family of six adult children, three grandchildren, and his lovely wife Eva.

Over the decades, Mr. Garcia has demonstrated his dedication and commitment to American Canyon, and we wish him well in his retirement. As such, it is fitting and proper that he be honored for his 24 years in public service.

#### OCEANVIEW FIRE DEPARTMENT'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

#### HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 19, 2024*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, this past September, I had the honor of commemorating the historic 100th Anniversary of the Oceanville Volunteer Fire Company, a milestone that marks decades of exceptional service to our community. Oceanville Fire is the oldest fire department in Galloway Township, established in 1924 by local community members. These visionary individuals, primarily farmers and shell-fishermen, recognized the urgent need for fire protection and rescue services. Their selfless dedication set the foundation for the department we know today. The department, now consisting of 39 men and women, continues to serve the township with unwavering commitment. Their dedication as extraordinarily well-trained firefighters echoes the spirit of the founding members many years ago, providing a sense of security to the township. Through the years, Oceanville Fire has proven to be a vital part of the community and has played a crucial role in making its residents feel safe. I am deeply grateful to the Oceanville Volunteer Fire Company for their century of great service and may they continue to protect and serve for many more. God bless Oceanville Fire Department, and God bless our United States of America.