

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING A TRAILBLAZING CAREER IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE: U.S. ATTORNEY EREK LAWRENCE BARRON

**HON. KWEISI MFUME**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding achievements and historic tenure of Maryland's outgoing United States Attorney, Erek Lawrence Barron. He is an experienced lawyer, an accomplished legislator, and a champion of civil rights, and his time as U.S. Attorney has left the people of Maryland safer and more secure in their communities, with greater confidence in the integrity of the justice system.

Mr. Barron earned his Juris Doctor from the prestigious George Washington University Law School in 1999 and earned admission to the Maryland Bar that same year. He began his career in public service as an Assistant State's Attorney in Prince George's County in 2001, primarily prosecuting violent crimes, before transferring to Baltimore City in 2004 and continuing in this position until 2006.

The next phase of his career was at the Department of Justice, as a Trial Attorney in their Criminal Division. There, he focused on tackling the scourge of organized crime, investigating and prosecuting figures involved in regional and national gangs.

This law enforcement experience, gained at both the state and federal level, had Mr. Barron well-prepared for his subsequent role as Counsel and Special Advisor to then-Senator Joe Biden, serving on the United States Senate's Judicial Committee's Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs. Soon after, he was a member of the Justice and Civil Rights Review Team for President Barack Obama's Presidential Transition Team.

Given his high qualifications and extensive experience, it is no surprise that in 2014, the good people of Prince George's County, Maryland elected Mr. Barron to the House of Delegates. In the state legislature, he prioritized public safety and criminal Justice reform, co-authoring bipartisan legislation that instituted sweeping improvements to Maryland's sentencing and corrections systems.

His thoughtfulness and effectiveness as a legislator helped Mr. Barron win re-election in 2018, and he continued serving in the General Assembly through October 2021, when the United States Senate confirmed him as the chief federal law enforcement official in the great state of Maryland.

When he took his oath of office, Mr. Barron became the first African American to serve as Maryland's United States Attorney. Despite the historic nature of his service, Mr. Barron never sought out the limelight—he focused entirely on doing his job and doing it well, working closely with state and local law enforcement to implement crime-fighting strategies that reduced violent crime.

Most importantly, Mr. Barron got results. During his tenure, Maryland saw homicide rates drop by 41 percent. He established a new Violent and Organized Crime Section within the office and instructed his prosecutors to utilize an "Al Capone" model of prosecution, using all available legal means and resources to get repeat offenders off the streets. He also established a new Civil Rights and Special Victims Section, a dedicated unit focused on prosecuting hate crimes, civil rights violations, and crimes committed against our most vulnerable populations.

Mr. Barron's incredible value to Maryland is exemplified by a case of federal-local partnership that led to a major crime bust. Ivan Bates, Baltimore's State's Attorney, approached Mr. Barron for assistance in getting the federal resources necessary for a wiretap. Mr. Barron personally lobbied law enforcement leaders and secured those resources—and after a 6-month operation, 39 people across 4 criminal networks were arrested, 67 firearms were confiscated, 15 stolen vehicles were recovered, and more than \$350,000 in drug money was seized. That is the power of an effective partnership.

Now that his term as our United States Attorney has ended, I join Governor Moore, former Governor Hogan, and law enforcement officials across our state in thanking Mr. Erek Lawrence Barron for his tireless efforts to make our streets safer and our communities more secure. I congratulate him on his many achievements.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF NORTHEAST DELTA DENTAL

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Northeast Delta Dental and their achievement in receiving the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Northeast Delta Dental was founded in 1961 as a not-for-profit dental company administering care in Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire. In New Hampshire, Northeast Delta Dental plays a crucial role in providing dental insurance to over half of insured Granite Staters. Additionally, through their Northeast Delta Dental Foundation, the organization supports various oral health initiatives, contributing over 1.3 million dollars in 2023 to programs that enhance community wellbeing.

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality award is a recognition that honors businesses and organizations that have the highest standards of excellence, innovation, and sustainability. Northeast Delta Dental was recently recognized as a 2024 recipient, one of only five companies in the United States to receive the award and the first ever from New Hampshire.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I want to

congratulate Northeast Delta Dental for their remarkable achievement. This well-deserved recognition highlights their commitment to high standards of care and community involvement in the Granite State.

HONORING THE EAST TEXAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

**HON. NATHANIEL MORAN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the East Texas Symphony Orchestra and to celebrate its February 22nd "Spirit of America" concert.

Originally founded in 1936 as a non-professional group of lawyers, oil operators, teachers, and students from Tyler Junior College, the ETSO is now a delegation of professional musicians as talented as any who are passionate about sharing high-quality symphonic music with East Texans from Vaughn Auditorium located on the beautiful campus of the University of Texas at Tyler.

Under the thoughtful, skilled, and dynamic leadership of Music Director, Richard Lee, the ETSO connects East Texans with the joy, grandeur, and profound beauty of the timeless sounds and experiences that only orchestra music can bring.

And, the "Spirit of America" concert is another such experience—with the added elements of history, patriotism, and love of country.

Featuring the extraordinary performers from Texas College and Jarvis Christian University, and musical compositions by Aaron Copland and Aaron Dworkin that include the narrated words of two of America's greatest statesmen—George Washington and Abraham Lincoln—this concert will inspire and challenge each of us to remain firm in our principles and steady in our resolve.

Thanks to Director Lee, and all the talented composers, musicians, and staff for their hard work in making this concert possible.

It was a night to remember.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPHINE BARBEE

**HON. JOHN W. MANNION**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. MANNION. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Josephine Barbee, mother of UAW International Representative Mark Barbee, who resides in my district in Syracuse, NY.

Born on July 23, 1939, Josephine Barbee was a devoted mother and a true pioneer in early childhood education and community service. Along with her brother, Dr. Bishop Leonard R. Williams—pastor of Zion Holiness Church and Bishop of the Great Lakes District—she played a critical role in designing,

• 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.

producing, and implementing vital community programs across Newark, New Jersey.

Her work included the creation of summer programs, lunch initiatives, and a food bank that have helped meet the needs of families and children in underserved communities, ensuring they had access to essential resources during difficult times.

Josephine Barbee also founded the M.E. Stith Daycare Center at Zion Holiness Church, named in honor of her aunt. This daycare center became a cornerstone of early childhood development in Newark, serving as a nurturing and educational environment for generations of young children.

Her commitment to increasing community access to vital services continued throughout her career with the Essex County Division of Welfare, where she worked to improve socioeconomic conditions in the community. Even after her official retirement in 1985 she continued to support youth programs that still serve the greater Newark community today.

While Josephine Barbee passed away on February 1, 2025, her legacy is carried on by her son, Mark Barbee, who shares his mother's commitment to serving others, ensuring that her profound impact remains alive and well in the lives of those she touched. We are fortunate that Mark continues to carry the torch she lit in my hometown of Syracuse, NY.

CONGRATULATING MR. JOSÉ  
CANTORAL ON BEING NAMED  
MR. AMIGO 2025

### HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

MR. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mr. José Cantoral on being named Mr. Amigo 2025.

Since 1964, the Mr. Amigo Association has celebrated the friendship between the cities of Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Each year, the Mr. Amigo Association selects an individual that promotes and contributes to the cultural exchange between our two countries and helps maintain the dialogue and friendship that have tied our cities together for so long.

Mr. Cantoral has spent his career producing quality music and entertainment that has enriched our culture and inspired people from across the world with a love for music and the arts.

Through his music and through his work on the Cantoral Institute, Mr. Cantoral has become a prominent figure in music and film. He has co-authored music in famous movies such as Disney Pixar's "Coco" as well as being nominated for a Latin Grammy for his musical contributions.

Mr. Cantoral is now the third member of his family to receive the honor of Mr. Amigo. His late father, Roberto Cantoral having received the honor in 1981 and most recently his sister, Itati Cantoral, in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Mr. Cantoral, for his contribution to music and congratulate him on this remarkable achievement.

RECOGNIZING NICOLE SCHMITT

### HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

MR. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the extraordinary work delivered by Nicole Schmitt, our Director of Operations and Scheduler. Throughout her tenure in our office, she helped direct a dynamic and highly effective professional team, including recruiting and supervising staff assistants and Congressional interns.

During her tenure, Nicole executed many top-tier engagements, including meetings for foreign heads of state, national travel, and managing the 2025 Presidential Inauguration events for approximately five hundred Iowans who came to visit the Nation's capital.

Further, Nicole proved pivotal in helping the team work with stakeholders across the state and the aisle to earn our team the Top-10 most bipartisan member of Congress, by focusing on delivering results.

Equally, Nicole helped organize a series of "after-hours" Capitol tours and joined me in leading constituents on a unique historical look of the hallowed halls of Congress—just ask her about the Senate chandelier.

Leveraging her naturally spirited personality and proven expertise as a Parliamentary Intern in the Houses of the Oireachtas, Ireland, and clerk in the Iowa House of Representatives, Nicole remains successful in bringing people together to accomplish great things.

Most importantly, Nicole is a friend to us all, not least of all my kids, who will always remember her scavenger hunts during their Junior Congresswoman visits in Washington, D.C. We are grateful for her service with our team and wish her success as she returns to the Great State of Iowa, and all the victories Iowa State football can provide her.

The distinctive accomplishments of Nicole's service reflect well upon herself, the people of Iowa, and the United States.

HONORING THE BALTIMORE  
SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS FOR 45  
YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDU-  
CATION

### HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

MR. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an iconic Baltimore institution and one of the top five public arts high schools in the United States, the Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA).

The Baltimore School for the Arts was founded in 1979, envisioned as a school with a specialized mission to give Baltimore City students the opportunity to train for a career in the visual and performing arts. The BSA set out to achieve this without sacrificing their students' academic potential, combining their artistic instruction with a rigorous college preparatory program.

For 45 years, the Baltimore School for the Arts has not only fulfilled the mission entrusted to it—it has far surpassed it. With a graduation rate exceeding 95 percent and one of Mary-

land's highest reading proficiency rates, the BSA's students thrive inside the classroom and beyond. Its alumni boast a six-year college graduation rate of 81 percent and they can be seen in prestigious galleries and on stages and television screens across the country.

The BSA has achieved these consistent and impressive results by instilling in its students the core set of values upon which the institution was founded. Its instructors encourage pupils' curiosity, foster their self-confidence; build up their technical expertise; promote co-operation and collaboration teach about global perspectives; and encourage students to develop a sense of purpose. These values enable them to mold students who are not only talented artists and scholars, but also well-rounded people.

The BSA has proven to be a tremendous boon for the Baltimore community. They have formed professional collaborations with institutions across the city, including the Everyman and Hippodrome Theatres, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and the Walters Art Museum, providing their students with the opportunity to learn from walking artistic professionals. So many notable alumni have walked through its doors: Actress Jada Pinkett Smith, actor Lawrence Gilliard, Jr., fashion designer Christian Siriano, visionary painter and sculptor Shinique Smith, and the one-of-a-kind rapper, songwriter, and actor, Tupac Shakur.

Along with the more than 400 high school students that the BSA serves every year, the school also provides a free after-school program, To Work in Gaining Skills (TWIGS), to over 500 Baltimore City students between the 2nd and 8th grades. These students are introduced to various art disciplines and skills, and TWIGS alumni make up roughly half of the BSA's annual freshman admissions. In addition, the BSA annually brings thousands of children and their families to their campus to see free live performances.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Baltimore School of Arts for their great contributions to my community and its people over these last 45 years. The high-quality education that they offer introduces students to new art forms and career paths while imbuing them with deep confidence that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to. Given the magnitude of their achievements thus far, I eagerly look forward to seeing what great artists, performers, and innovators emerge from the halls of the Baltimore School for the Arts in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE PERFECT SAT  
SCORE OF SAHLI NEGASSI

### HON. LaMONICA McIVER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mrs. McIVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Sahli Negassi, a NJ-10 student at West Orange high school who received a perfect score on the SAT this year. Less than 1 percent of SAT test-takers earn a perfect score each year, and Sahli's accomplishment is nothing short of extraordinary. His SAT preparation was largely self-directed, relying on free resources, and using his time and determination to study for the exam. Beyond

academics, he is deeply involved in extra-curricular activities at West Orange High School. He has been a dedicated member of the cross-country and track teams since seventh grade and spent two seasons on the color guard. Sahli is also the president of the math team, chapter president of the National Honor Society, a varsity chess team member and part of the Royal Strings ensemble. His involvement in multiple activities and honor societies speaks to his well-rounded excellence. After graduating high school, he hopes to attend Harvard and study law. Any school would be lucky to have such a bright young mind.

What an incredible accomplishment and a shining example of New Jersey excellence. I Congratulate Sahli. He makes New Jersey proud.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF MARGARET "MARG" VENEKLASEN

#### HON. TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of Margaret "VK" VeneKlasen (Margaret Lorraine Bombasaro)—lovingly known to her family and friends and the broader Santa Fe, New Mexico community as Marg.

It is hard to know where to start in honoring the life, achievements and contributions of this unstoppable renaissance woman who transformed our city and our state for the better over the almost 70 years she gave us. A fierce leader and advocate for women and girls, realtor, entrepreneur, skier, flight attendant, tap dancer, athlete, matriarch, icon, and Santa Fe Living Treasure.

Marg often said "It's better to be true to yourself than be popular." And true to herself she was—although beloved she was for it.

Born in 1927 to a tight-knit, union, Italian immigrant family in Joliet, Illinois, Marg was a young athlete who started her career as a stewardess for United Airlines. It was on a flight that she met Walter Paepcke, who invited her to his new Aspen Ski Resort in Colorado—which is where she discovered two of her great loves: skiing and her future husband, Gordon VeneKlasen.

Marg and Gordon, a geophysicist and WWII veteran, were wed in 1953, and shared their love of New Mexico and each other until his passing in 1998. They moved to Santa Fe in 1956, where Marg met her next love: our Santa Fe mountains. She wrote in her journal at 94: "I see the ski mountain from my window and check on it every morning. I gave up skiing this year, but the mountain is where my heart is."

True to her life-long love of sports—which she encouraged all of her five children to pursue—Marg was committed to making sports accessible to all New Mexican children, regardless of their background. In 1973, she co-established the Santa Fe Public School Ski Program, which helped 40,000 Santa Fe public school children learn to ski. In the 70's, 80's, and 90's, she built and led the Northern New Mexico Soccer Club (now known as the Northern Soccer Club), and through her leadership, in 1981, girls soccer was sanctioned as a varsity sport in New Mexico.

Marg championed "everyone watches women's sports" before it was cool. She herself was an accomplished tennis player, skier, and golfer—she was the first woman to serve on the FIFA National Rules Committee and fought for girl athletes to have access to public playing fields across sports.

A successful real estate broker for over 40 years, she co-founded VeneKlasen Property Management with her husband Gordon, which they ran together for almost 30 years, with a commitment to employing local workers and paying decent wages.

Kiwanis Club of Santa Fe named Marg "Person of the Year" for her commitment to protecting the traditional culture and wellbeing of the city.

A champion for women and girls throughout her life, she served on the boards of Girls, Inc. and the Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center.

In 2002, Marg was asked by the late Governor Bill Richardson to carry the Olympic Torch on its last prestigious leg of its journey: lighting the Olympic bonfire on Santa Fe Plaza.

On January 22, 2025, at the age of 97, Marg passed away peacefully in her beloved home of 62 years.

Today, we include Marg's name and accomplishments into the RECORD. In the words of one of her sons, Garrett, "She taped wings on people and made them into who they were." We add our gratitude for the many flights of possibility New Mexicans took because of her generosity and love for our whole state. It is my honor to enshrine her contributions to our state, culture, and economy in history.

#### RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND RETIREMENT OF SOMERSWORTH POLICE CHIEF TIMOTHY J. MCLIN

#### HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy and career of Somersworth Police Chief Timothy J. McLin.

After 33 years in law enforcement Chief McLin is embarking on a well-earned retirement. For more than three decades, he has served as a member of Somersworth Police department, rising from patrol officer to Chief of Police in 2022. Throughout his career Chief McLin has played a crucial role in supporting Granite Staters through the Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team (ACERT) and Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP).

In addition to his decades in law enforcement service, Chief McLin is a proud veteran of the United States Navy, serving from 1984 to 1990 in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Upon his completion of military service, he returned to Somersworth where he began his 33 years of public service to his hometown.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I wish Chief McLin well in his retirement, thank him for his commitment to the people of Somersworth, and congratulate him on a job very well done.

#### RECOGNIZING REGAN HINSON

#### HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Regan Hinson and her service and contributions to Virginia's First District and the Nation.

Regan always served our office and our team well. Always a friendly face in the office, she was highly motivated and energetic about her work and her relationships. Regan was very committed to connecting with the wonderful people and beautiful landscapes of Virginia's First District, both of which featured heavily in her communications on behalf of our office.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in recognizing the service and accomplishments of Regan Hinson. May the Lord bless her as she embarks on a new challenge, and I look forward to seeing her continued success in the future.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA INTERNATIONAL'S EDUCATORS RISING

#### HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the 10th anniversary of Educators Rising, a nationwide movement dedicated to eliminating the teacher shortage in America by recruiting, preparing, and inspiring the next generation of educators.

Educators Rising is a community-based, Career and Technical Student Organization that supports middle and high school students in rural, urban, and suburban communities with a passion for teaching in their communities.

With over 60 percent of K–12 educators in the United States teaching within 20 miles of the high school they attended, creating pathways for local talent to enter the teaching profession plays a critical role in addressing our Nation's shortage of teachers.

As part of their Grow Your Own initiative, Educators Rising helps create diverse teaching workforces that reflect communities where students live. Teachers who share similar backgrounds and experiences with their students foster stronger student-teacher relationships, improved academic outcomes including higher test scores, rates of high school graduation and college enrollment, more inclusive school climates, fewer suspensions, and lower rates of chronic absenteeism.

Educators Rising has a presence in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with over 1,400 school chapters and 38 state-level partnerships, and works with institutions of higher education and State Departments of Education to create seamless transitions into the education field.

Over 70 schools across Virginia have Educators Rising Chapters that are contributing to ending the teacher shortage in America. Since 1994, over 325,000 students have participated in Educators Rising, including nearly 145,600 students since its rebranding in 2015.

Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) International was established in 1906 as a non-profit organization that supports teachers and school leaders by strengthening their interest in the teaching profession throughout their careers. PDK International awards nearly 100 scholarships annually ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 to students pursuing careers in education through Educators Rising and other PDK International programs.

On behalf of Virginia's 8th Congressional district, I commend Educators Rising's work and express my gratitude for their efforts in recruiting local and diverse talent and building career pathways for educators.

IN MEMORY OF CLIFFORD ODELL  
RUTLEDGE

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated husband, loving father, dotting grandfather, committed educator, astute entrepreneur, patriotic soldier, broadcast hall of famer and friend of longstanding, Mr. Clifford Odell Rutledge. Sadly, Cliff passed from labor to reward on Sunday, February 16, 2025. A funeral service to celebrate his extraordinary life will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at Nichols Chapel AME Church in Phenix City, Alabama.

Cliff's journey began with his birth to Dock and Willie Mae Rutledge. He graduated from South Girard High School in Phenix City and furthered his education at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama. Following his studies, Cliff served our country honorably in the United States Army from 1950 to 1953 during the Korean Conflict.

It has been said that "Education is the passport to the future; it belongs to those who prepare for it today." Cliff dedicated a significant part of his life to preparing young people for their futures, embarking on a distinguished 41-year career in education. His educational journey included roles at his alma mater, South Girard High School, South Girard Elementary, and Ridgecrest Elementary, where he coached junior high basketball teams and instilled in his students the importance of winning in the game of life.

Throughout his career, Cliff pursued continuous improvement through advanced studies in school administration at both Auburn and Tuskegee Universities. He served as a teacher and principal at Susie E. Allen Elementary School and later became the Director of Community Education for the Phenix City Public Schools, overseeing Head Start and Adult Education Programs.

In addition to his contributions to education, Cliff was a gifted radio broadcaster. His journey began in the late 1950s as the host of a Sunday morning gospel show on WCLE. In 1964, he joined WOKS radio station, where he launched his sports announcing career, becoming a trusted voice in the Chattahoochee Valley sports community. His dedication to broadcasting earned him induction into the Chattahoochee Valley Sports Hall of Fame in 2014.

Cliff was not only committed to education and broadcasting but also to his community.

As the saying goes, "Service is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth." Cliff paid his rent well and he paid it well. His commitment to justice led him to co-found United to Save Ourselves, an organization dedicated to equality and change. His efforts were recognized by several community organizations, including the USO's Hometown High Achievers Award in 2002 and the SAMARC Foundation Award, which honored him as a community legend in 2012. In 2020, the City of Phenix City recognized him with a Trailblazer award during a Black History Proclamation Event, and in 2023, the Alabama State Conference of the NAACP honored him with their esteemed Humanitarian Award.

Cliff loved his family deeply and held his faith close to his heart. He began serving God early in life at Nichols Chapel AME Church, where his musical talents flourished. His passion for music led him to serve as Minister of Music at the church and as a member of the Board of Trustees.

None of Cliff's achievements would have been possible without the love and support of his family, including his late wife of 50 years, Sadie Jean Nix Rutledge, his son, Timothy Thomas; his granddaughter, Clemitruis Hartley, and his niece and devoted caregiver, Decliffia Coleman and a host of other relatives who loved him dearly.

On a personal note, Cliff was my longtime friend and supporter for over 50 years. He was also my brother in the bond of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. His wise counsel and sage advice have profoundly influenced my journey and success as I serve in Congress. For that, I will always be grateful. Moreover, his life and career exemplify the noble purpose of our great fraternity—"Achievement in all fields of human endeavor." Truly the world is a better place because of Cliff.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife Vivian, and the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District in honoring the life and legacy of Mr. Clifford Odell Rutledge. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family, friends, colleagues, and all those who mourn his loss. May we all find comfort in our abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TOM COLE**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 26, 2025*

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 49.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and

any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 27, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 4

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Elbridge Colby, of the District of Columbia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

SD-106

10 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Matthew Whitaker, of Iowa, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador, Department of State.

SD-419

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and multi VSOs: Paralyzed Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Student Veterans of America, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, The Elizabeth Dole Foundation, and National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

SD-G50

MARCH 5

10 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of James Bishop, of North Carolina, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

SD-608

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of David Fotouhi, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator, and Aaron Szabo, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator, both of the Environmental Protection Agency.

SD-406

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Jayanta Bhattacharya, of California, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

SD-562

10:15 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine stemming the tide of antisemitism in America.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the United States Transportation Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year

2026 and the Future Years Defense Pro-	gram; to be immediately followed by a	Committee on Small Business and Entre-
	closed session in SVC-217.	preneurship
	SD-106	To hold hearings to examine reforming
		SBIR-STTR for the 21st century.
		SR-428A