

## 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 them 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