

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE PASSING OF RICHARD “DICK” ERVIN MESSBARGER

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to speak on the passing of Richard “Dick” Ervin Messbarger. Mr. Messbarger was an exemplary Texan and a pillar of the Kingsville community.

Mr. Messbarger received his bachelor’s degree in English Language and Literature from St. Mary’s University and master’s degree from Texas A&I University, now Texas A&M University Kingsville. His commitment to improving his community will always be remembered.

As a proud Navy veteran and the 38th recipient of the Naval Aviation Honorary Wings of Gold, Mr. Messbarger was the founder and key member of the Naval Air Station (NAS) Kingsville Task Force. His devotion to NAS Kingsville helped alleviate many of the concerns that made the base vulnerable to possible closure and ensure that this vital economic engine for Kingsville remained intact. His exemplary efforts have ensured that our military community in Kingsville is up to the highest standards of excellence.

Mr. Messbarger was also the former president of the Kingsville Chapter of the Navy League, the former Navy League National Director and, the Executive Director of the Greater Kingsville Economic Development Council (EDC) for 32 years. Mr. Messbarger was a proud recipient of the Sam Walton Business Leader Award. His exemplary work was further recognized when he received the Kingsville Citizen of the Year award in 2008. In 2013, he was the recipient of the Otis West Lifetime Service Award by the Kingsville Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful South Texas, I wish to honor the life of Mr. Richard “Dick” Ervin Messbarger.

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OSCAR G. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center for 75 years of service to Veterans across the Upper Peninsula.

Since first opening its doors in 1950 to provide care for returning World War II Veterans, the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center has

stood as a pillar of support to those who have worn the uniform of our Nation. At that time, it was the largest construction project ever undertaken in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, opening with an inpatient capacity of 264 beds. Over the past 75 years, it has grown and adapted to meet the changing needs of our Veterans. Today it proudly serves nearly 22,000 Veterans across the 15 counties of the Upper Peninsula, the most rural patient base in the entire VA system.

The Medical Center’s reach and impact are made possible by a dedicated team of more than 830 fulltime employees and 250 volunteers, 125 of which are drivers who transport patients to the facility from around the region. It offers a variety of services to former service members including a community living center, a chapel, primary and urgent care, surgery, specialty care, dental, audiology, and plans to have a permanent MRI by 2026.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in recognizing the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center on celebrating their 75th Anniversary. I express my deep gratitude for its enduring commitment to the Veterans of the Upper Peninsula.

CELEBRATING THE INDUCTION OF DAVE POULIN INTO THE MAINE BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME

HON. JARED F. GOLDEN

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. GOLDEN of Maine. Mr. Speaker, in small-town gyms across Maine, winter evenings are marked by two familiar things: the sound of sneakers on hardwood and the voice of a coach emphasizing the fundamentals. For twenty-two years in Winthrop, Maine that voice belonged to Coach Dave Poulin.

A local celebrity in his own right, Coach Poulin taught generations of young men the value of working hard, and working together, to bring out the best in one another—and on and off the court. In addition to coaching hundreds, he also taught social studies to thousands at Winthrop High School from 1973 to 2019. Coach Poulin’s induction into the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame is a testament to that public service.

On the court, Coach Poulin’s teams were reliable in a way that is rare in high school sports: twenty-one tourney runs in twenty-two seasons and multiple state titles to show for it. That record speaks to skill, but it speaks even more to what Coach Poulin inspired in his athletes—a sense of responsibility to one another, to their community, and ultimately to something greater than themselves.

That’s why I know this is as much an honor for Coach Poulin as it is for the community of Winthrop. His former players, students, and colleagues are a credit to him—and it is my hope that they have been able to celebrate this great achievement alongside Coach Poulin.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring public servant, leader, and Maine’s newest Hall of Famer, Coach Dave Poulin.

DC CRIMINAL REFORMS TO IMMEDIATELY MAKE EVERYONE SAFE ACT

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in staunch opposition to H.R. 4922, the D.C. CRIMES Act. This is not a serious legislative effort to enhance public safety; it is a blatant political maneuver to override the local authority of Washington, D.C., and restrict judges’ ability to make individualized sentencing decisions for young adults. It is a bill that uses the nearly 700,000 residents of D.C., who pay more federal taxes per capita than any state, as political pawns.

This bill is a direct assault on the District’s local sovereignty. It would fundamentally alter D.C.’s criminal justice system by reducing the eligibility age for the Youth Rehabilitation Act (YRA) from 24 to 18. It seeks to eliminate judicial discretion to impose sentences below mandatory minimums, and would restrict vital alternatives like probation, community service, and the ability to seal the records of young adult offenders. This proposal is particularly egregious because it undermines a program that works. The YRA, which provides a path for rehabilitation, has been shown to reduce recidivism, thereby supporting public safety. Individuals who have convictions set aside under the YRA are significantly less likely to reoffend. Instead of celebrating this success, H.R. 4922 would dismantle it.

Let us be clear about the hypocrisy of this measure. House Republicans from 34 states, including Louisiana, Missouri, Ohio, Alabama, and North Carolina, voted to reduce the eligible age to 18 here in D.C., even though the age in their own home states is 20 or higher. Supporters of this bill are targeting a program in D.C. that is similar to laws that exist in their own states. In perhaps the most glaring example of this double standard, representatives from Utah voted to lower the age here while their own state sets the age at 25, a full year older than D.C.’s current law. In those states, such programs are deemed effective, but here, in the Nation’s capital, they are being singled out for elimination. This double standard exposes this bill for what it is: an act of political punishment, not a genuine reform.

Real solutions to crime do not come from a “Super City Council” in Congress. They come from empowering local communities and trusting judges to make thoughtful, individualized decisions. I urge my colleagues to stand with the residents of D.C. and against this discriminatory and hypocritical bill. Vote No on H.R. 4922.

● 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.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF KEN MOORE

HON. TIM WALBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, it is my special privilege to recognize Ken Moore of Monroe as the Veteran of the Month for September and honor him for his dedicated service to our great Nation.

Ken Moore served with distinction as a member of the Air Force during the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged in 1967. For his heroic contributions, he was awarded the Expert Marksmanship Badge, the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Upon returning home from Vietnam, Ken served for 25 years as a member of the Monroe Police Force, initially as an officer and later as a detective, ensuring the safety of our communities.

Ken has remained actively involved in the veteran community. He has made significant contributions to the VFW and American Legion, and he is a devoted member of AMVETS Monroe.

Notably, Ken also co-founded Flag O'er Veterans with Sam Struth after he observed several cemeteries in the community did not have American flags honoring veterans. The initiative pays tribute to deceased veterans in the Monroe community by raising funds and installing flagpoles with an American flag, lights, and memorial plaques in local cemeteries where veterans are laid to rest.

Ken Moore's remarkable life of service and his leadership working on behalf of America's veterans inspire us all. May others know of my high regard for Ken, as well as my deep gratitude for his lasting contributions to the country we love.

RECOGNIZING THE VISIT OF ECU-MENICAL PATRIARCH BAR-THOLOMEW

HON. LaMONICA McIVER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mrs. McIVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend a warm welcome to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, an esteemed leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church, upon his visit to the United States.

For more than three decades, Patriarch Bartholomew has stood as a moral voice in times of global challenge. When Europe faced the refugee crisis, he joined hands with Pope Francis to affirm the dignity and humanity of those fleeing Syria, Africa, and beyond in search of safety and a better life. In an increasingly divided world, he has worked tirelessly to build bridges—fostering interfaith dialogue among Christians, Jews, Muslims, and people of all faith traditions. As the global climate crisis deepens, he has reminded us that creation itself is a sacred trust, urging us to honor and protect the natural world with which God has blessed us. For this leadership, he is being awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize during his visit.

Patriarch Bartholomew's spiritual guidance has inspired Orthodox Christians across the globe. In my own district, he has been a shepherd to the congregation of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Union, New Jersey. Under his leadership, the St. Demetrios community has flourished as an example of faith in action—welcoming neighbors from every walk of life to their Annual Greek Cultural Festival and offering vital community services year-round.

It is therefore my great honor to join my constituents and colleagues in welcoming His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, to our Nation. We are confident that his visit will be both meaningful and successful.

ISSUES WITH H. RES. 713, CENSURE OF REP. OMAR

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I strongly object to this censure resolution which does not include a single quote from Representative ILHAN OMAR (MN-05) and seeks to punish her for comments she never made. After the unconscionable act of gun violence that took the life of Charlie Kirk, Representative OMAR clearly and immediately condemned this assassination. She expressed her profound shock, sadness, grief about this despicable act of political violence. She expressed sympathy and empathy for Mr. Kirk's wife and young daughters who are enduring unimaginable pain and sorrow.

Sadly, Republicans are misleading Americans and deliberately using this resolution to further divide Democrats and Republicans at a time when all Americans need to come together to condemn acts of political violence, which are becoming all too commonplace in our Nation.

Censure is a serious tool that should be reserved for holding Members of Congress accountable for unethical or criminal behavior, like committing assault or accepting bribes, or for specific categories of speech that are not protected by the First Amendment, including direct threats against individuals, inciting treason or insurrection, or the use of aggressively insulting “fighting words” against another Member on the House Floor.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against this censure and will continue to defend our right to free speech to represent our constituents and voice our conscience as Representatives in this great democracy.

HONORING FOX LAKE, ILLINOIS MAYOR DONNY SCHMIT ON HIS INDUCTION INTO THE GRANT COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my dear friend, and Fox Lake, Illi-

nois's 23rd Mayor, Donny Schmit, a public servant, community leader, and proud alumnus of Grant Community High School. I am proud to recognize Mayor Schmit for his decades of dedicated service to the people of Fox Lake and his lifelong commitment to civic and community engagement. And I am proud that Donny's service is now forever recognized with his induction this year into the Grant Community High School Hall of Fame.

The Grant Community High School Hall of Fame honors alumni who have achieved distinction, outstanding accomplishment, or significant contribution in their professions, their communities, their schools, their families, or their personal lives. Inductees are chosen as role models for students and as examples of the excellence the school seeks to inspire. Donny's life and career undoubtedly reflect these very ideals.

Donny graduated from Grant in 1971, where he lettered in both football and wrestling. Following high school, he embarked on a successful career in the trades, but his true calling has been in service to his hometown community. Over the years, he has served as a Village Trustee, Planning Commission Board member, and is currently in his fourth consecutive term as Mayor of Fox Lake. In this role, Donny has been a steadfast supporter of Grant High School, regularly attending events, welcoming student interns to the Village, incorporating student voices into municipal planning, and honoring students and coaches.

His service extends well beyond his mayoral responsibilities. Donny dedicated more than 25 years as a volunteer with the Fox Lake Fire Department, coached young athletes with the Lakeland Cardinals, and helped lead programs with the Lions Club, including as an instructor for the blind bowling league. In addition, he has been an active member of his church, where he received the Christi Fidelis Award from Cardinal Francis George for his exceptional volunteer work.

Through his leadership, Donny has guided significant improvements to the Village of Fox Lake and has been a tireless advocate for his community. He embodies the values of service, leadership, and integrity and serves as a role model for students and citizens alike.

As part of his Hall of Fame induction, Donny will be celebrated during a series of homecoming events—including a reception, pep assembly, the varsity football game, and the homecoming parade—giving the community and students alike the opportunity to honor his achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mayor Donny Schmit for his extraordinary service to Fox Lake, his devotion to Grant Community High School, and his well-deserved induction into the Grant Community High School Hall of Fame. His contributions will have a lasting impact, and his example will continue to inspire future generations.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I was present for the vote but my voting card did not record. I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 276.

HONORING ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. JOHN JAMES

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. JAMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual head of the Orthodox Christian Church, the second largest Christian church in the world. This week, His All-Holiness is visiting the White House and members of Congress, and I am proud to join in recognizing his leadership.

Patriarch Bartholomew has been a tireless voice for peace, religious freedom, and human dignity around the globe. He is also a recipient of the prestigious Templeton Prize, joining the ranks of Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, individuals who have dedicated their lives to advancing humanity's purpose and moral compass.

Michigan, and especially Macomb County, is blessed with a vibrant Greek-American community. More than 7,200 residents in Macomb trace their heritage to Greece, with Sterling Heights home to the largest concentration. Within Macomb County alone, nearly 4,500 Greek Orthodox faithful gather in worship and service. Parishes like St. John Greek Orthodox Church and Assumption Greek Orthodox Church are not just places of faith, they are pillars of community life, strengthening families, serving neighbors, and preserving treasured traditions.

On behalf of Michigan's 10th District, I extend my gratitude and pride to His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew for his spiritual leadership and his enduring contributions to people of faith in Michigan, across America, and around the world.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VERNON
M. KRAWCZYK

HON. TONY WIED

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. WIED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Vernon Krawczyk, a devoted veteran, business owner, educator, and longtime resident of the Green Bay community.

Born on December 23, 1933, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to Zeno and Isabelle Krawczyk, Vern exemplified service and commitment throughout his life. A proud graduate of Central Catholic High School in 1952, he attended St. Norbert College before enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1954, serving honorably until 1957. He completed his degree at St. Norbert College in 1959 and married Judy Selissen on November 27, 1959, building a life rooted in family and community.

Vern and Judy operated the Skytop Supper Club from 1972 until their retirement in 2005, creating a cherished gathering place for the community. Vern's dedication to Green Bay was remarkable as he served as an adjunct instructor at NWTC for over 15 years, teaching business, marketing, and responsible beverage service. His leadership extended to roles as president of the Brown County Tavern

League for over 20 years, former chair of the Brown County Republican Party, and member of the St. Vincent Hospital Advisory Council, the Bellevue Optimist Club, and the NEW Zoological Society's Tech Advisory Commission. He also served on the City of Green Bay's Protection and Welfare Committee and chaired fundraising for the Shy Ranch for Boys, further reflecting his commitment to education and youth. In his spare time, Vern enjoyed gardening, cooking, fishing, and deer camp, always with a focus on conservation. Through and beyond his hobbies, he touched countless lives with his warmth, generosity, and tireless work ethic.

Vern is survived by his wife, Judy, their three children, Patty, Steve, and John; eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, Vern Krawczyk's life was a testament to service, family, and community. His contributions have left an enduring impact on Green Bay, and his memory will continue to inspire us. I offer my deepest condolences to his loving wife Judy, family, friends, and the Green Bay community.

RECOGNIZING AND WELCOMING
HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW TO
WASHINGTON, D.C.

HON. SUSIE LEE

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Washington, D.C. He will be in our Nation's Capital this week after visiting New York City, where he will receive the distinguished Templeton Prize. The Templeton Prize was previously received by Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, among others.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is a world-leading advocate for interfaith dialogue and peace. As Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople for nearly 35 years, the Patriarch has taken on the most difficult issues facing the world, whether it's building bridges between East and West, protecting our environment, or fostering dialogue between religious faiths.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is also an international environmental leader and has earned the title "Green Patriarch." He consistently used his role to bring people of different faiths together to discuss how they could be good stewards of the Earth, and he made caring for the environment a central commitment in his role as spiritual leader. In 1997, the Patriarch even received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor awarded by this body.

On behalf of the vibrant Greek Orthodox community in Southern Nevada, I extend my deepest respects to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming him to our Nation's Capital.

RECOGNIZING MR. DAVID WIL-
LIAMS FOR RECEIVING THE
BEST COMMUNITY BANKING
AWARD FOR 2025

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize my friend, Mr. David Williams, for being awarded the Best Community Banking Award for 2025 by the Community Bankers of Michigan. This prestigious and well-deserved distinction reflects his dedication to Michigan's banking industry and his tireless contributions to communities throughout Michigan's 1st Congressional District.

Mr. Williams' long and distinguished career in banking began at a small community bank in Houghton, before spending 25 years working for larger financial institutions in Ohio and lower Michigan. Throughout those years, he remained committed to a personal goal: returning to the Upper Peninsula to manage and grow a community bank.

For the past 25 years, Mr. Williams has led Upper Peninsula State Bank with steadfast commitment to both customer service and community engagement. His passion for serving his community extends beyond his day-to-day work, as reflected in his advocacy for the industry at both the state and federal levels. In addition to his role as President and CEO, he serves as a Michigan Federal Delegate for the Independent Community Bankers of America and is a long-time member of FIS's Strategic Planning Advisory Council.

Mr. Speaker, let us join in recognizing Mr. David Williams for receiving the distinguished Best Community Banking Award for 2025. I thank him for his enduring commitment to Michigan's 1st Congressional District and his invaluable contributions to our great Nation.

CELEBRATING THE 80TH
BIRTHDAY OF JOSEPH ELDRIDGE

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the lifelong contributions of Reverend Joseph Eldridge, who celebrated his 80th birthday earlier this year. I have had the honor of knowing Joe for his selfless devotion to the causes of human rights and social justice over many decades, particularly with respect to Central and South America. Joe has been called a "servant-leader", which I think is a perfect way of describing the way he has offered his knowledge, his integrity, his hard work and his faith to lift up the poor, the sick and the oppressed, often at great risk to his own safety and security.

Throughout his life, Joe Eldridge has demonstrated his love of humanity and his respect for every person's dignity. He listened deeply and given wholeheartedly. From his earliest beginnings, growing up in Tennessee and inspired by his father, who was a Methodist minister, Joe has stood up for what is right. In a social environment that was filled with racism and fear, he believed in a God who is fundamentally loving and accepting. He became

active in the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960's and 1970's, and after attending seminary decided to expand his knowledge of the world by working as a missionary. He soon ended up in Santiago, Chile, where he endured the 1973 coup that deposed President Salvador Allende. As he began witnessing the abuses of the Pinochet regime and guiding foreign journalists to document them, his friends started disappearing. He returned to the United States to pursue a master's degree at American University's School of International Service.

Over the next two decades he piled up an impressive record of leadership by founding the Washington D.C. Office on Latin America, with which I have worked closely on so many issues, and directing the D.C. office of Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First). He also worked on Latin American rights for the United Methodist Church and got himself thrown out of Honduras for investigating abuses by its military junta.

In the 1990's and 2000's, Joe continued his passionate advocacy for human rights and justice through his service as a School of International Service professor and as American University's longest serving chaplain. He is known for transforming the Kay Spiritual Life Center into "a hub for social justice and courageous conversation on campus," and for bringing human rights and racial equity into the forefront of campus engagement. And it was not only in the university community that he performed his pastoral role—as a minister, he married legions of social activists and christened hundreds of their children. Whether it was weddings, funerals, or baptisms, Joe was always there for his community.

In recent years, he has also served as an active and generous member and officer of various boards and advisory committees, including those of the Center for International Policy, the Area Foundation, and the U.S. Institute of Peace. In each of these roles, Joe has brought not only his kind and gentle demeanor and his thirst for truth and fairness, but also a wealth of experience, wisdom and good judgment. His influence has been legendary and welcomed.

Joe is also a devoted husband and father who delights in spending time with his family. He has traveled widely with his loving wife, Maria Otero, and takes great pride in his three children, Justin, David and Ana, who lead their lives according to the values they learned from him.

As Joe retires from his boards and other formal duties, I hope my colleagues will join me in offering him thanks for a lifetime of service that has made the world a better place. I wish him many years ahead of good health and what our late, great colleague, John Lewis, called "good trouble".

LOWERAGE AGE AT WHICH A MINOR MAY BE TRIED AS ADULT FOR CERTAIN CRIMINAL OFFENSES IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SPEECH OF

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 5140, the D.C. Juvenile Sentencing Reform Act. This bill is not a serious attempt to address crime; it is a regressive, discriminatory, and counterproductive piece of legislation that will only worsen the challenges facing our communities.

This bill would lower the age at which children can be prosecuted as adults in Washington, D.C., from 16 to 14 years old for certain crimes. This will also have the impact of reducing the minimum age for transferring a juvenile to adult court to be tried as an adult. House Republicans from three states—South Dakota, Alaska, and California—voted to reduce the age to 14 in D.C., even though the age is 16 in their own states. The supporters of this bill claim it will make D.C. safer, but the facts and history prove otherwise.

First, let's talk about the discriminatory nature of this proposal. The juvenile justice system in Washington, D.C., already has stark racial disparities: more than 93 percent of youth arrests in the first half of 2025 were of Black youth. Lowering the age for adult prosecution will inevitably push more Black children into the adult system, a system that is not equipped to rehabilitate them.

Furthermore, this proposal stands in direct opposition to what we know about juvenile justice and public safety. Research from the CDC and the National Research Council has consistently found that transferring juveniles to the adult system increases violence rather than reducing it. Youth charged as adults are more likely to reoffend than those processed in juvenile courts. This is not a deterrent; it is a recipe for a cycle of violence and incarceration.

This bill would make Washington, D.C., an outlier in its approach to juvenile justice. While the current law already allows prosecutors to charge 16 and 17 year-olds as adults at their discretion, without a judge's approval, H.R. 5140 would lower that age even further.

Even in states with a history of tough-on-crime stances, many are moving in a more rehabilitative direction.

This approach aligns with a broader national trend, including in several Republican-led states, to reform juvenile justice with a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. For example, Texas, a state known for its traditionally tough stance on crime, has undertaken significant reforms since 2007. These reforms have focused on encouraging local, evidence-based supervision for low-level youth offenders, which has led to a significant reduction in the state-level committed population and millions of dollars in cost savings while protecting public safety. Juvenile arrests in Texas dropped by 27 percent between 2007 and 2011 following these changes.

Similarly, in Utah, Republican Governor Gary Herbert signed a comprehensive set of reforms in 2017 with near-unanimous support

from the Republican-led legislature. These reforms have also reduced reliance on locked detention by diverting more young people into community-based programs. Early outcomes from these changes show that the use of locked detention has fallen significantly, while the use of diversion is on the rise.

Even in Georgia, another state that has historically had a lower age for adult prosecution, there has been a movement to extend the juvenile justice system. In 2022, the state passed a bill to raise the adult criminal age from 17 to 18 for most crimes, recognizing that this provides adolescents with better opportunities for rehabilitation.

This bill would make Washington, D.C., an outlier. While the current law already allows prosecutors to charge 16 and 17 year-olds as adults at their discretion, without a judge's approval, H.R. 5140 would lower that age even further. In contrast, many states are moving in the opposite direction, raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction, not lowering it.

Real solutions to violent crime do not come from sending middle schoolers to adult court. They come from investing in communities. They come from supporting our schools, expanding after-school programs, providing job training, and ensuring access to mental health services.

I urge my colleagues to reject this misguided and dangerous bill. Vote No on H.R. 5140.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF CAPTAIN MATTHEW J. JERBI

HON. CHRISTOPHER R. DELUZIO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. DELUZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Captain Matthew J. Jerbi, United States Navy, a resident of Fairfax, Virginia, who is retiring after 30 years of faithful service to our Nation following his commission from the United States Naval Academy.

After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1995, Captain Jerbi began his dedicated service to our Nation. Captain Jerbi served the Navy in a wide variety of roles over the next thirty years, both throughout the country and overseas.

His assignments include USS *Vincennes* (CG 49); USS *O'Brien* (DD 975); USS *Mustin* (DDG 89); USS *Normandy* (CG 60); Commanding Officer of USS *Independence* (LCS 2); Commodore of Destroyer Squadron 7; Director of Warfare Integration; Navy Unmanned Task Force; Deputy Chief of Navy Legislative Affairs; Director, Navy House Liaison Office; and as Special Assistant to the Chief of Navy Legislative Affairs.

Throughout his career, Captain Jerbi has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the country and has always striven to expand his education. In 2001, he earned a Master of Arts in National Security Affairs from the Naval Post Graduate School. His personal awards include the Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (five awards), and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (one award).

I commend Captain Jerbi for his dedication to our country and the sacrifices he and his

family have made. I thank him, his wife Kerenza, and two daughters, Isabella and Natasha, for their service and wish him fair winds and following seas as he concludes a distinguished career.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Captain Matthew Jerbi as he retires from the U.S. Navy.

CELEBRATING AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S DAY

HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Women Inspiring Women Leaders Chapter of American Business Women's Association (ABWA), charted in Fredericksburg, Virginia, on July 31, 2021, and to celebrate American Business Women's Day.

ABWA's Women Inspiring Women Leaders Chapter held its first meeting on May 22, 2019, with a clear vision: to provide a community for businesswomen to grow through networking connections that empower, advocate and educate in a diverse atmosphere of meetings and community involvement.

Through their efforts, they have brought together businesswoman from a variety of fields, offering opportunities for personal and professional growth through mentorship and more.

I am proud to join them and their sister chapters across our country in celebrating 76 years of ABWA and its impact in Fredericksburg, Stafford, and Central Virginia.

I thank the Fredericksburg Women Inspiring Women Leaders Chapter for their dedication to uplifting others, and I'm proud to join them in celebrating their achievements and ongoing commitment to empowering women in business.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Fredericksburg Women Inspiring Women Leaders Chapter for their lasting impact on our communities and their vital contributions to our local and national economy.

HONORING HIS ALL-HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, on his visit to Washington, D.C., and his reception of the Templeton Prize in New York City.

Patriarch Bartholomew has served since 1991 as the spiritual leader of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, including many from the Greek Orthodox community from Queens, New York, whom I am proud to represent. Known as "first among equals" among the Primates of the Orthodox Church, he carries forward a tradition that reaches back nearly two thousand years to the Apostle Andrew.

Throughout his ministry, he has been a champion of religious freedom, human rights,

and interfaith dialogue. He has worked to build bridges between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and has consistently spoken out for peace.

He is also recognized as the "Green Patriarch" for his leadership in addressing climate change and environmental destruction, which he has called a sin against God's creation. His efforts have brought together scientists, world leaders, and faith communities to safeguard our planet.

The Ecumenical Patriarch is no stranger to this Capitol. In 1997, he received the Congressional Gold Medal under this very dome. As he visits Congress once again, we honor his lifetime of service as a peacemaker and a bridge-builder for our world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing His All-Holiness Bartholomew, a voice of faith, hope, and reconciliation for our time.

HONORING ALICE MERRIMAN'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. RUSS FULCHER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Alice Merriman a very happy 100th birthday, who will be celebrating her milestone on September 26, 2025.

In 1925, Alice was born on a farm in Battle Creek, Nebraska. Fifty years ago, Alice moved to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Alice worked hard to achieve her master's degree in Idaho.

After working diligently to complete her degree, Alice spent the next twenty years working in Idaho. Together with her husband, Bob, Alice raised two children. Alice has exemplified the values of perseverance, dedication, and hard work. Alice's dedication to her family and her faith exemplifies true determination and courage.

Alice and her family have consistently embodied the traditional values we cherish in Idaho.

I thank Alice Merriman for her incredible example of perseverance and fearlessness. I wish her a very happy birthday.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN LEGION POST 667

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of American Legion Post 667 in Universal City, Texas.

Since its chartering in 1975, Post 667 has stood as a cornerstone of service, supporting veterans, active-duty service members, and families across northeast Bexar County.

For five decades, the Post has served as a hub for camaraderie, patriotic education, civic engagement, and community service.

From mentoring youth through programs that instill duty and honor, to assisting veterans as they transition to civilian life, Post 667 has embodied the American Legion's mission of service not self.

Their members have organized countless community events, supported patriotic observances, and provided a strong voice for those who have worn the uniform of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this milestone is an opportunity to celebrate a proud legacy and to honor those who have selflessly given back to our country and community.

I commend American Legion Post 667 for fifty years of leadership, service, and sacrifice, and I wish them continued success in the decades ahead.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAKE ELMO, MINNESOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the City of Lake Elmo, Minnesota. On Saturday, September 13, 2025, residents of Lake Elmo kicked off a month of celebrations with family, friends, and neighbors at Lions Park, including a flyover from the Commemorative Air Force of South St. Paul, Minnesota. Natural beauty, clear waters, and good fishing have long attracted people to the waters of what was then called Bass Lake and neighboring lakes. In 1848, it is believed that two Virginians, Bernard and Maria Cyphers were the first white settlers to the area. Just south of Sunfish Lake, the Cyphers built a hotel and tavern called the Lake House. In 1850, Stillwater Road was built through the community, which served as the main route for stagecoaches taking passengers between Saint Paul and Stillwater.

By 1872, the Saint Paul, Stillwater and Taylor's Falls Railroad—later the Omaha Road—was built, making it easier for tourists to reach the lake from Saint Paul. A post office was established at Bass Lake Station, with the Lake House being used as a town meeting site. In 1879, a prominent Saint Paul businessman and railroad promotor named Alpheus B. Stickney was prompted by his wife Kate to pick Lake Elmo as the new name for the growing village and its largest lake, which was a name believed to be based on a popular character in literature at the time.

Utilizing the city's nearby environment and valuable natural resources, Lake Elmo quickly became a popular summer resort. With the railways in place, Lake Elmo also became a bustling commercial hub for agriculture and industry, supplying farmers with grain houses, blacksmiths, and repair shops. After Stillwater Road was fully paved and completed in 1920, the village underwent rapid development. In 1925, supported by economic activity, the downtown was formalized as Lake Elmo Village.

While no longer an agricultural hub, Lake Elmo continues to share its natural wonders with surrounding communities. Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve and Sunfish Lake Park offer our community access to the outdoors with modern and equestrian campgrounds, fishing piers, a boat launch, and trails for hiking and bicycling.

Lake Elmo has played a special role in Minnesota as a place of historic significance and great natural beauty. Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Lake Elmo.