

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 136.

RECOGNIZING ALVERTA HARVEY NICHOLS HARGIS FOR HER SERVICE DURING WWII AND FOR BEING AWARDED THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

HON. MARK ALFORD

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary American, Alverta Harvey Nichols Hargis, whose legacy represents the very best of our Nation.

In 1943, during World War II, Alverta answered the call to serve. Not on the battlefield, but on the home front, as one of the trailblazing Rosie the Riveters. At a bomber plant in Detroit, she played a vital role in strengthening our military and securing victory for freedom around the world.

These women didn't ask for recognition. They stepped up because their country needed them. They redefined what was possible, breaking barriers and proving that courage, grit, and patriotism know no bounds.

Today, through the Congressional Gold Medal, we offer a grateful Nation's thanks, though no honor can fully capture the magnitude of their contributions.

May Alverta's family always take pride in her remarkable life and service. Her story is one of quiet strength and enduring impact, and it will continue to inspire generations to come. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Alverta Harvey Nichols Hargis and all those who helped defend freedom from right here at home.

RECOGNIZING THE MINISTRY OF BISHOP THOMAS L. BROWN, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heart both grateful and heavy to honor Bishop Thomas L. Brown, Sr.—a faithful pastor, distinguished scholar, tireless leader, and a dear, longtime friend—as he retires as Presiding Prelate of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. An event to celebrate his remarkable stewardship and ministry sponsored by the Sixth Episcopal District, West Georgia Region, will be held on Saturday, April 25,

2026, at the Page-Doleman Complex in Columbus, Georgia.

Born June 21, 1951, in Oakland, Mississippi, Bishop Brown's life has been shaped by faith, learning, and service. Valedictorian of Walker High School, a graduate of the University of Mississippi, and a scholar who earned both the Master of Divinity and the Doctor of Theology degrees with honors from the Interdenominational Theological Center in cooperation with Emory and Columbia, he has modeled the union of intellect and piety. As a member of Theta Phi honor society and as an esteemed teacher and lecturer at institutions including Candler, Columbia, and Princeton, Bishop Brown has formed minds even as he formed hearts.

His ministry began at Ole Miss and matured across pastorates in Mississippi and Georgia, Rice Chapel, Murray Memorial, St. James, Butler Street, College Park, and as organizing pastor of Good News Community Church. From 1990 to 2006, he served with distinction as the sixth President and Dean of the Phillips School of Theology at ITC, where he oversaw the formation of more than ninety-five graduates and founded the Annual C.M.E. Pastors' Conference, an enduring gift to clergy development.

Elected the 54th Bishop of the C.M.E. Church in 2006, he shepherded the Fourth Episcopal District and, since 2018, the Sixth Episcopal District, while chairing the Department of Christian Education. His episcopal ministry deepened clergy formation, strengthened congregational life, and extended the church's witness in justice and mercy. A sought-after preacher, professor, and conference delegate—both national and international—Bishop Brown has represented the C.M.E. Church with dignity, wisdom, and prophetic compassion. He has been a founding member of the Concerned Black Clergy of Atlanta and a steadfast advocate for the homeless and the condemned, living out Scripture's call to care for "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40).

Beyond titles and honors, Thomas Brown has been my friend. He has counseled me in difficult hours, rejoiced in triumphs, and exemplified what faithful friendship looks like: honest, humble, and true. I think of Paul's words when I remember him: "I thank my God every time I remember you" (Philippians 1:3). Those words capture the gratitude of countless lives he has touched—students, parishioners, colleagues, and communities.

Bishop Brown's wife, Dr. Louise Baker-Brown; children, Charisa and Thomas, Jr.; and the people of the Sixth Episcopal District should all know that their husband, father, pastor, and shepherd has run a remarkable race. I thank them for being with him every step of the way. His life marked by scholarship, pastoral tenderness, courageous civic engagement, and sacrificial service leaves a legacy that will continue to bear fruit for generations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife Vivian and I, along with the more than

765,000 people of Georgia's 2nd Congressional District in giving thanks for Bishop Thomas L. Brown, Sr.; in celebrating his faithful ministry; and in wishing him a restful and joy-filled retirement. For a life poured out in service, we echo the heavenly commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21). May God bless him richly in the days ahead.

RECOGNIZING JUDD POPE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional student from my district, Judd Pope. As a senior at Piedmont High School in Piedmont, Alabama, Judd has made school history as the first student at his school to earn a perfect score on the ACT.

In February of 2025, Judd achieved the perfect ACT super score of 36, an accomplishment that reflects not only academic excellence, but a true commitment to learning.

Judd will graduate from Piedmont High School in May of 2026 and plans to attend Auburn University, where I have no doubt, he will continue to excel.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating Judd's achievement. He represents the very best of Alabama, and we are proud to see him carry that spirit forward.

HONORING THE CHICAGO CUBS ON THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the Chicago Cubs' 150th anniversary and their enduring contributions to the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago. Since joining the National League as a charter member in 1876 under the leadership of William and Albert Spalding, the Cubs have remained an influential team in Major League Baseball.

From their historic home at Wrigley Field to baseball legends such as Ernie Banks, Ryne Sandberg, and many more, the Cubs have thrilled generations of fans. Their achievements include 17 National League pennants and 3 World Series titles, highlighted by the unforgettable 2016 World Series championship. Beyond the field, the Cubs have supported more than \$62 million in donations through Cubs Charities since 2009. These donations promote youth sports and well-being, and improve lives and communities across all 77 neighborhoods of the City of Chicago and throughout the State of Illinois. As we celebrate this milestone, we honor not only a

• 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.

baseball team but a club that has united communities, inspired pride, and enriched our national pastime. The Chicago Cubs remain a timeless symbol of resilience, tradition, and hope.

The recognition of the Chicago Cubs' 150th anniversary underscores the franchise's enduring place as one of the most historic and beloved institutions in American sports and affirms the team's unique role in shaping the identity and spirit of the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois. Their legacy extends far beyond the baseball diamond through the countless memories shared by millions of fans around the world.

Mr. Speaker, please join me and all my colleagues in congratulating the Chicago Cubs on their 150th anniversary.

COMMEMORATING THE 111TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 111th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. As a Jewish American, I feel a profound responsibility to speak out against genocide and oppression wherever they occur. We must never forget the atrocities committed more than a century ago, that resulted in the death of 1.5 million men, women, and children at the hands of the Ottoman government.

As history continues to be under threat of being rewritten, it is more important than ever to speak clearly and truthfully and to call this crime by its rightful name—genocide. We owe it to the victims, their descendants, and to future generations to honor their memory and ensure that this history is neither erased nor forgotten.

Today, I stand in solidarity with Armenian Americans in Illinois and across the Nation as we honor the memory of those who were lost. We must continue to educate the world about the first genocide of the 20th century.

RECOGNIZING MR. JIM MOREHEAD

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2026 Tulare Kiwanis Farmer of the Year, Mr. Jim Morehead. A lifelong resident of the Central Valley and respected local leader, Jim has dedicated decades of service to his community, leaving a lasting impact on generations to come.

After Jim's family moved from Texas to Pixley, California, following World War II, they established a multi-generational farming operation that continues today. Jim went on to earn a bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Fresno State University and used his education to reinvest in his family's farm.

Over the years, he cultivated a wide variety of crops alongside his father, including cotton, corn, wheat, and alfalfa, before transitioning to almond production with his son in the late 1990s.

Beyond his work in the field, Jim has been a steadfast advocate for California. He has served in numerous leadership roles with organizations such as the Central Valley Almond Association, Pixley Tri City Growers Cotton Cooperative, California Cotton Alliance, and Pixley Irrigation District, helping advance policies and practices that support farmers across the region.

Jim's commitment to service extends well beyond the agricultural sector. He served 20 years on the Pixley Unified School District Board, fostering student achievement and community growth. For the past 25 years, he has been an active member of the Pixley Foundation, supporting vital resources like the local food pantry and library. In addition, Jim has been a faithful leader at the Pixley United Brethren Church, where he has served on the board for 45 years.

Jim exemplifies the values of hard work, service, and leadership that define the Central Valley. His contributions to Pixley, Tulare County, and the greater agricultural community will be felt for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Mr. Jim Morehead as the 2026 Tulare Kiwanis Farmer of the Year and in thanking him for his outstanding service to the Central Valley.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF LISA PEREZ JACKSON

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an incredible woman, Mrs. Lisa Perez Jackson, a distinguished native of my hometown and the district I serve. Her career includes an incredible path, spanning nearly four decades in state and federal government, public policy, and the private sector. While Mrs. Jackson was born in Philadelphia, she was raised in Pontchartrain Park by her adopted parents, Benjamin and Marie Perez. In 1979, she graduated as valedictorian from St. Mary's Dominican High School and would later graduate summa cum laude from Tulane University in 1983 with a degree in chemical engineering. As a National Merit Scholar, Ms. Jackson went on to earn a Master of Science in Chemical Engineering from Princeton University in 1986. Shortly thereafter, Jackson would begin her distinguished career in government, first as an engineer with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington, D.C. before subsequent promotions as deputy director and acting director of enforcement of the Agency's regional office in New York City.

After 16 years with the EPA, Jackson joined the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in March 2002 as assistant commissioner of compliance and enforcement

and would later serve as assistant commissioner for land use management. She was appointed to lead DEP in 2006 by then Governor Jon Corzine and would later serve as the Governor's Chief of Staff.

On January 23, 2009, Jackson was confirmed by the United States Senate to serve as President Barack Obama's Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. During her tenure as EPA Administrator, Jackson oversaw the development of stricter fuel efficiency standards and EPA's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and setting National Ambient Air Quality Standards. In 2013, Jackson became Apple, Inc.'s Vice President of Environment, Policy and Social Initiatives. During her tenure at Apple, Jackson led the company's transformation into a global leader in corporate environmental responsibility, achieving 100 percent renewable energy for Apple's worldwide operations in 2018 and implementing an industry-leading supplier clean energy program that added over 5 gigawatts of new clean energy globally. Jackson oversaw Apple's commitment to become carbon neutral across its entire business and supply chain by 2030, a commitment that Apple is still on track to meet to this day.

Beyond environmental leadership, Jackson launched Apple's Racial Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI) in June 2020 following nationwide protests against racial injustice. Under her leadership, the program more than doubled its initial \$100 million commitment to surpass \$200 million in investments over three years, focusing on three core pillars: education, economic empowerment, and criminal justice reform. These investments include the creation of the Propel Center—a \$25 million global innovation and learning hub serving the entire HBCU community with curriculum in AI, machine learning, social justice, and entrepreneurship. Jackson also expanded the HBCU C² initiative to 45 community coding centers and regional hubs on HBCU campuses, reaching more than 160,000 learners, and committed over \$50 million to HBCUs and Hispanic-Serving Institutions for STEM opportunities. These investments also include but are not limited to the funding of venture capital firms, Community Development Financial Institutions, and Minority Depository Institutions supporting Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Jackson was also responsible for Apple's worldwide government affairs function, product accessibility work, and education policy programs, reporting directly to CEO Tim Cook. She was recognized by TIME Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. Throughout her career, Jackson earned the respect of engineers, environmentalists and peers alike for her deep understanding of the legislative process and her commitment to accuracy and fairness, viewing politics not simply as a beat, but as a public trust, connecting government actions to the people they affect. As she retires, she leaves behind a legacy of integrity, insight, and service to the country. Today, I salute her on an incredible life of service.

HONORING BOB FUCHS FOR HIS INDUCTION INTO THE DADE COUNTY FARM BUREAU HALL OF HONOR

HON. CARLOS A. GIMENEZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bob Fuchs, a leader in South Florida's agricultural community and a third-generation orchid grower from Homestead, Florida, on his induction into the Dade County Farm Bureau Hall of Honor.

For more than six decades, Mr. Fuchs has dedicated his life to the cultivation, preservation, and advancement of orchids, helping to elevate Miami-Dade County as a global hub for horticultural excellence. From working alongside his grandfather, Mr. Fuchs developed a deep respect for the land and a passion that would shape his life's work.

Mr. Fuchs went on to build that passion into a world-renowned enterprise, R.F. Orchids, while also serving his community as an educator. His contributions to the field extend far beyond our district. Mr. Fuchs has been credited with the discovery of new orchid species in Central and South America and led the American Orchid Society as President.

Mr. Fuchs' achievements have earned him widespread recognition, including induction into the Florida Agriculture Hall of Fame and international honors from leading horticultural institutions.

Mr. Fuchs' story reflects the very best of South Florida, hard work, resilience, and a deep-rooted connection to the land. His lifelong contributions have strengthened our local economy, advanced agricultural science, and inspired generations of growers and conservationists.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ASHLEY HINSON

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mrs. HINSON. Mr. Speaker, due to my attendance at the House Appropriations Committee's markup of the FY27 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, I missed the first vote on April 22, 2026.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 130.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAUL HEAVENRIDGE

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Paul Heavenridge who passed away on December 10, 2025. Paul devoted his career to improving the quality of life for the community of Petaluma and the extended North Bay.

Paul founded and led Literacyworks, a Petaluma-based nonprofit established to expand literacy for adults and families to provide

dynamic resources and pathways for lifelong learning. Under his stewardship, Literacyworks supported adult learners with practical, research-based tools and partnerships that improved educational access, workforce readiness, and family wellbeing. In 2015, Paul helped launch the Literacyworks Center at Santa Rosa Junior College—a model program providing scholarships and wraparound support for nontraditional and economically disadvantaged students.

Paul's commitment to improving literacy extended beyond Literacyworks. He served as a Sonoma County Library Commissioner to support public libraries and equitable access to reading, learning, and information, characteristics he deemed essential for community health. Through Literacyworks AmeriCorps, Paul also championed statewide library-led literacy initiatives, partnering with the California State Library's California Library Literacy Services to strengthen capacity at libraries throughout the state. These initiatives helped coordinate programming, training, and day-to-day support so local literacy programs could thrive.

Beyond classrooms and computer labs, Paul served his community on the Friends of the Petaluma River board, helping steward a treasured local waterway through conservation, education, and public events.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Heavenridge believed that literacy is a gateway to work, independence, and a fuller life, and he dedicated his career to making that gateway wider for everyone. I respectfully ask that you join me in honoring his extraordinary life and in extending our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and the many learners whose futures were brightened by his work.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF VIVIAN COMEAU, GIRL SCOUT BRONZE CROSS RECIPIENT

HON. HERBERT C. CONAWAY, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Vivian Comeau, a young woman from Trenton, New Jersey. I also recognize her as a recipient of the Girl Scout Bronze Cross, one of the highest honors bestowed by Girl Scouts of the USA.

The Girl Scout Bronze Cross is a national lifesaving decoration bestowed by Girl Scouts in extraordinary circumstances. It recognizes acts of exceptional heroism in which a Girl Scout demonstrates uncommon courage, sound judgment, and selflessness while saving another person's life.

Vivian Comeau embodied courage, confidence and character throughout her life and certainly during her fourteen-years as a Girl Scout with Girl Scouts of Central and Southern New Jersey. She was a dedicated member of Troop 30575, a committed sister to her fellow Girl Scouts, and a young woman whose life reflected service, kindness, and quiet strength. Her participation in Girl Scouting was not defined by accolades or badges, but by her commitment to the Girl Scout promise. She consistently showed up for her troop, her community, and the values she carried with her every day.

Vivian's heroism was demonstrated through her decision to be an organ donor, truly a profound choice that gave others renewed hope and life. Her generosity continues to inspire and comfort many beyond her family and community. Following a national review, Girl Scouts of the USA honored Vivian's selfless spirit with the Bronze Cross, affirming the exceptional courage and compassion of her final act of service.

Vivian Comeau's life reminds us that heroism often lies in thoughtful decisions made with generosity and concern for others. Through her actions, she showed that leadership is measured by the lives touched through courage and care, not only by titles or recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I join the residents of New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District, the Girl Scout community, and all who are inspired by Vivian's life, in honoring Vivian Comeau, Girl Scout Bronze Cross recipient. Her legacy of service, courage, and character will endure, and she will be remembered for the difference she made in others' lives.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. BARBARA BIGSBY BOYD

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Dr. Barbara Bigsby Boyd. Dr. Boyd was elected in 1994 to the Alabama House of Representatives for the 32nd District covering portions of Calhoun and Talladega Counties. She has served as the Democratic Caucus Vice Chair and a member of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators.

Dr. Boyd was born in Anniston, Alabama, on January 31, 1937. She attended Cobb High School and received her B.A. Degree in French and English from Miles College, her M.A. in Supervision and Curriculum Development, and her Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership and Reading from the University of Alabama.

Dr. Boyd spent 45 years in education serving in both public and private education in secondary, two-year and four-year colleges including Jacksonville State University, Gadsden State Community College, and Miles College.

Dr. Boyd is a member of the Trustee Board of Murray Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, a life member of the NAACP, as well as the Alabama New South Coalition and Dorcas Art and Social Club. She is also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Phi Delta Kappa, and Kappa Delta Pi. Her committees in the State House include Children and Senior Advocacy, County and Municipal Government, Rules and State Government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary career of Dr. Boyd and wish her the very best in her retirement. I thank her for her service to the state of Alabama.

RECOGNIZING MATHEWS
MUSEUM'S MAY FAIRE

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mathews Museum in Mathews County, Virginia, as it proudly sponsors the County's annual spring festival, May Faire, to be held May 2, 2026, and May 3, 2026. Now in its seventh year under the Museum's stewardship, this year's celebration is especially significant as it honors our Nation's 250th Anniversary.

Founded nearly 14 years ago, the Mathews Museum has grown steadily in both size and stature, becoming an integral part of the County's cultural and economic vitality. Guided by a dedicated Board of local residents, the Museum is committed to preserving, exploring, and sharing the rich history of Mathews County, ensuring that its stories remain vibrant for future generations.

Through the collection and preservation of books, documents, artifacts, and cultural objects, the Museum brings the County's past to life. Its exhibits and educational programs offer residents and visitors alike a deeper understanding of Mathews County and highlight the important role the Commonwealth of Virginia has played in our Nation's history. Each year, May Faire invites attendees to explore a different aspect of the County's heritage. This year's focus highlights the area's rural way of life, its people, traditions, and enduring stories.

Festivities on the historic Court Green will include traditional May Pole dances, musical entertainment, an archaeological dig led by the Fairfield Foundation, and a children's area featuring live animals, games, and hands-on activities. Inside the Museum, new exhibits will further engage and inspire. Among them are the Hunley General Store and a developing diorama of the Battle of Cricket Hill. Guests can also explore the history of the Indigenous peoples who lived in the Mathews area through original artifacts, a hands-on touch table, and a hand-carved dugout canoe.

I commend the citizens of Mathews County for their dedication to preserving their history and sharing it with the public. Their efforts enrich not only their community but also the Commonwealth of Virginia and our Nation as a whole.

RECOGNIZING THE 14TH PASTORAL
ANNIVERSARY OF REVEREND
JOHNNY H. FLAKES, III

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heart overflowing—full of gratitude, memories, and deep affection—to celebrate the 14th pastoral anniversary of Reverend Dr. Johnny H. Flakes, III, a faithful servant of God, a tireless community champion, and a dear friend I have known for many years. An event to celebrate his ministry and stewardship will be held on Sunday, April 26, 2026, at The Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia.

I grew in my faith for over two decades as a member of Fourth Street under the preaching and steady hand of his father, Rev. Dr. J.H. Flakes, Jr., and from those sanctuary pews I watched a young Johnny Flakes, III first learn to love the church, the Word, and the people of Fourth Street. To see him now, shepherding the same flock with humility, wisdom, and joy, moves me in ways words hardly capture. He carries forward a legacy of faith that shaped an entire community.

His life is a tapestry woven with deep learning and undying service. From Tuskegee's gridiron to Ole Miss classrooms of theology and Mercer's halls of ministry formation, his scholarship has always been in service to the flock. But it is in the everyday work, counseling a grieving family, visiting the sick, opening the doors of Fourth Street Towers and the daycare he chairs, and standing with those struggling for dignity, where his heart is clearest.

His civic and ministerial affiliations read like a ministry of presence: President of the General Missionary Baptist Congress of Christian Education of Georgia; Faculty Member of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education; President of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance; Southeast Regional Vice President of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education; Southeast Regional Coordinator for the National Baptist Convention Sunday School Publishing Board; member of the American Baptist College Board of Trustees; Chair of the Boards for Fourth Street Towers and Fourth Street Daycare and Academy; member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; and a devoted Rotarian in Columbus. He serves on the John Amos Cancer Center Advisory Board, the Valley Healthcare Board, the Board of Historic Columbus, the Mayor's Advisory Council for Diversity, Prosperity, and Unity, and so many other places where hope is built and lives are lifted.

These affiliations are not mere lines on a résumé, they are evidence of a man who shows up. He shows up for education, for housing, for health, for history, for young people, and for justice. He shows up when the community needs a voice, a hand, or a prayer.

His awards—from the Dr. Henry Cook Social Action Award to a Congressional Commendation—honor his work. But the truest measure of his ministry is the lives changed: the child fed, the family housed, the student inspired, the grieving heart held.

His family, including his wife, First Lady Jacquelyn Flakes, and his children, Braya, and Kevin have carried this calling with him, sharing joys and the burdens of ministry. He carries on the legacy of his late father Reverend J.H. Flakes, Jr. and beloved late mother, Robena Flakes. I thank the people of Fourth Street, to the countless boards and associations that have been strengthened by his wisdom, and to Reverend Flakes. I thank them for answering a sacred call with brilliance and for leading with conviction and tenderness, and for making Columbus a place that remembers what it means to love your neighbor.

There is a Scripture that I know has anchored him in storms and celebrations alike: "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Reverend Flakes has not grown weary. He has labored in hope, and the harvest of lives touched testifies to a faithful heart.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife Vivian, and me along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's 2nd Congressional District in honoring Reverend Dr. Johnny H. Flakes, III on his 14th pastoral anniversary—to give thanks for his steadfast ministry, to celebrate his community leadership, and to express our gratitude for a life that models the Gospel in word and deed. May God continue to bless him, his family, his flock and the Columbus, Georgia community.

RECOGNIZING MR. DON LAFFOON'S
RETIREMENT AFTER 47 YEARS
OF SERVICE TO ELECTRICAL
CORPORATION OF AMERICA

HON. MARK ALFORD

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize a remarkable Missouri business leader and true American success story—Mr. Don Laffoon of Raytown, Missouri—as he begins a well-earned retirement.

Don is the longtime President and CEO, and now Chairman of the Board, of Electrical Corporation of America, a Raytown-based company that has grown into a nationally respected contractor operating in more than 40 states, as well as Mexico and Canada. Under his leadership, the company has delivered complex industrial and power projects while maintaining a strong commitment to safety, quality, and integrity.

What makes Don's story especially meaningful is how it began. He joined the company in 1979 as a warehouseman and driver, completed an electrical apprenticeship, became a journeyman wireman, and worked his way up through nearly every role in the business.

In 2003, he and his partners purchased the company and continued building a strong operation that creates good-paying jobs and supports critical infrastructure.

Don has also devoted decades of service to the National Electrical Contractors Association, recently serving as Chairman of its Government Affairs Committee, advocating for contractors and workforce development nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Missouri's 4th Congressional District, I thank Don Laffoon for his lifetime of service and wish him continued health and happiness in retirement.

RECOGNIZING MS. LORI READY-
DIGIOVANNI

HON. GREGORY F. MURPHY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a vital member of the Jacksonville, North Carolina community, Ms. Lori Ready-DiGiovanni. Ms. Ready-DiGiovanni is receiving the 2025 HIRE Vets Platinum Award from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Lori is the Human Resources Manager at Stanadyne in Jacksonville, North Carolina, where she is receiving the award. The HIRE Vets Medallion Platinum Award was designed

by the HIRE Vets Act and is the only federal-level Veterans' employment award that recognizes companies for Veteran hiring, retention, and professional development. To receive this honor, companies must meet strenuous criteria regarding percentages of Veteran employees that are hired and retained, as well as provide resources to those employees that help with integration and personal growth. It is designed to highlight the companies and employees working to support our Veteran population.

While this is Lori's first time receiving the award at Stanadyne, it is, in fact, her fifth award since the HIRE Vets initiative was established in 2019. An outstanding accomplishment, her receipt of this award speaks highly of her devotion and steadfast loyalty to those who have courageously defended our Nation. Lori is a wonderful example of what all executives should be doing to support our service men and women as they transition back to civilian life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing and thanking Ms. Lori Ready-DiGiovanni and her dedication to supporting the Veteran population.

CONGRATULATING MR. KYLE BUCHANAN ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS PRESIDENT OF CRESTWOOD MEDICAL CENTER

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Kyle Buchanan on his appointment as President of Crestwood Medical Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

A native of Tusculumbia, in Alabama's 4th Congressional District, Mr. Buchanan brings more than two decades of experience in health care leadership, along with a strong record of improving hospital operations, advancing patient care, and strengthening workforce engagement. During his tenure as president of Helen Keller Hospital and Red Bay Hospital, he achieved meaningful progress in physician recruitment and retention, while enhancing the overall stability and performance of those institutions.

Mr. Buchanan has consistently demonstrated a commitment to servant leadership—understanding that the foundation of quality patient care begins with supporting dedicated health care professionals. His ability to foster collaboration among physicians, nurses, and staff has made a lasting impact on the communities he has served, and I have no doubt he will bring that same focus and energy to Crestwood Medical Center.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Mr. Buchanan has remained deeply involved in his community. His leadership roles with organizations such as Leadership Alabama, the University of North Alabama Board of Trustees, and the Shoals Chamber of Commerce reflect his dedication to service beyond the hospital setting. He has also been recognized for his contributions with Citizen of the Year honors and remains active in his church, where he serves in leadership roles.

Crestwood Medical Center serves as a critical provider of health care for families

throughout Huntsville and the surrounding counties, many of which make up my congressional district, and its continued success is vital to the well-being of North Alabama. I am confident that under Mr. Buchanan's leadership, Crestwood will continue to build upon its strong foundation and expand access to high-quality care for the community.

On behalf of Alabama's 4th Congressional District, I extend my sincere congratulations to Kyle Buchanan on this well-deserved achievement. I wish him continued success as he begins this new role and look forward to the positive impact his leadership will bring to the people of North Alabama.

RECOGNIZING THE 2026 CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION IN PUERTO RICO

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the dedicated judges and leaders who supported the 2026 Congressional Art Competition in Puerto Rico, an annual national artistic competition and experience designed to inspire high school students to explore art, innovation, and history.

The Congressional Art Competition provides students in grades 9 to 12 with a unique opportunity to develop original pieces that address real-world challenges through drawing, painting, and, most importantly, creativity.

Behind the success of this program stands an exceptional group of judges, professionals, and leaders in art and entrepreneurship who generously volunteered their time and expertise. They carefully reviewed student submissions, evaluating technical execution and originality, while also offering thoughtful feedback grounded in experience and academic rigor, ensuring a fair, thorough, and meaningful evaluation for every participant.

Beyond judging, these leaders demonstrated a deep commitment to mentorship and youth development. By exposing students to professional pathways, they reinforced the message that Puerto Rico's young people can compete, create, and excel at the highest levels. On behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, I extend my sincere gratitude to the judges and leaders who offered their perspectives and expertise to our district's 2026 Congressional Art Competition, and I include in the RECORD their names:

Dr. Irene Esteves, Deputy director of Collections and Exhibitions—Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR).

Mr. Walter Otero, Founder of Walter Otero Contemporary Art (WOCA), Gallerist, Curator, and Cultural Manager.

Dr. Melissa Ramos Borges, History of Art Professor—University of Puerto Rico.

Ms. Mariel Quiñones, Curator of the Pío López Martínez Museum—University of Puerto Rico at Cayey.

Ms. Ariana García, Illustrator and Augmented Reality Creator, Artist-in-Residence—Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR).

Mr. Fernando J. Montilla, Chief Innovation and Technology Officer, Atlantic University.

Their service reflects the very standards we hold our student innovators to—creativity, col-

laboration, and commitment to artistic expression.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, due to the House Committee on Appropriations markup not recessing on time and holding a vote, I missed the first vote on Wednesday, April 22, 2026.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 130.

HONORING ILENE PAPPERT ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Ilene Pappert on the occasion of her retirement after more than 50 years of dedicated service to the children and families of Staten Island, including 34 years as Director of Children's Aid Goodhue Center in New Brighton.

For nearly five decades, Ms. Pappert has been a steadfast and compassionate leader, devoting her life to uplifting young people and strengthening Staten Island's North Shore community. A trained social worker, she began her journey at Goodhue in the 1970s and steadily rose through the ranks before assuming the role of Director in 1992. Under her leadership, the Goodhue Center has nourished as a haven where generations of children have found support, mentorship, and opportunity.

Each day, Ms. Pappert could be found greeting children with warmth and care—whether helping with homework, tying a shoelace, or simply offering encouragement. Through after-school programs, summer camps, and family engagement initiatives, she helped create an environment where young people could grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Her leadership ensured that hundreds of children each year benefited from enriching programming in the arts, sciences, athletics, and beyond.

Beyond her work within the center, Ms. Pappert has been a tireless advocate for the Goodhue campus and the surrounding community. She worked closely with local elected officials to secure critical funding for programs and played a key role in preserving more than 40 acres of wooded land for public use, helping to ensure that future generations of Staten Islanders will continue to enjoy this treasured space.

Known for her gentle spirit and caring nature, Ms. Pappert has earned the admiration of colleagues, families, and community members alike. Her recognition as a 2026 Staten Island Advance Woman of Achievement is a testament to her extraordinary impact and enduring legacy.

As she transitions into retirement, we celebrate not only her remarkable career, but the

countless lives she has touched. The Goodhue Center, and all of Staten Island, is stronger because of her service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ilene Pappert for her lifetime of dedication and to wish her continued health, happiness, and fulfillment in the years ahead.

HONORING SHIRLEY SHERROD'S
60TH ANNIVERSARY IN ADVOCACY
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heart full of reverence and deep personal gratitude to honor Mrs. Shirley Miller Sherrod on the 60th anniversary of her tireless work for civil rights, economic justice, and the dignity of underserved farmers and rural communities. An event to celebrate her advocacy and remarkable life will be held on Friday, April 24, 2026, in Albany, Georgia.

A daughter of the Jim Crow South, Shirley Sherrod's life is testimony—written in endurance, courage, and relentless love. Born and raised in rural Georgia, she watched injustice with her own eyes as a young woman: at 17 she witnessed an all-white grand jury refuse to indict the man who took her father's life. From that wound came a vow—to spend her life defending the rights of her people. That vow was kept, not with fire or fanfare, but with steady, sacrificial labor that changed lives and moved a Nation.

Her commitment was strengthened by education and faith. Mrs. Sherrod studied at Fort Valley State University and Albany State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree; she holds a master's degree from Antioch University and is a 1993 Kellogg Fellow. Those classrooms sharpened her mind and equipped her to lead with both wisdom and humility.

Following the example of her parents, including her mother, Mrs. Grace Miller, Shirley set out to make a difference. Together with her late husband, the Rev. Charles Sherrod, she helped found the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education and co-founded New Communities, Inc., the Nation's first community land trust. For decades they sought to secure land, bread, and dignity for Black families who had been denied both. They fed the hungry, taught the hopeful, defended the dispossessed, and refused to surrender a dream of justice even when drought, discrimination, and punitive government practices deprived them of the land they had nurtured.

When Shirley was appointed Georgia Director of Rural Development at USDA, she carried with her a lifetime of moral authority. When she was wrongfully forced from that office amid deceit and malicious editing, she bore the blow with quiet strength that only deepened my admiration. She returned to the trenches she had always known—the fields, the co-ops, the kitchen tables of small farmers—refusing bitterness and choosing again to build.

For sixty years Shirley has been a voice for those whose voices are too often crowded out: Black farmers fighting to hold their land; chil-

dren denied equal education; families seeking access to markets and capital. She has organized, taught, advocated, and led institutions—The Sherrod Institute, New Communities at Cypress Pond (Resora), The Southwest Georgia Project—that remain beacons of hope and practical help for a new generation.

On a personal note, Shirley and Charles were more than colleagues in the struggle—they were friends and moral companions. They both stood with me in places of decision and pressure; they supported me and, with humility, held me accountable when justice demanded it. Shirley's friendship has been a sustaining gift—her counsel frank, her faith unshakable, her love a steady hand through seasons of trial.

There are moments in life that narrow everything to one clear truth. For Shirley, those moments have been countless acts of service: cajoling a reluctant lender to hear a farmer's story, sitting late with a grieving family, coaxing young leaders to raise their eyes to both truth and possibility. Her life makes real the Scripture that comforts and convicts us: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8). She has spoken—and acted—without ceasing.

Mary McLeod Bethune once urged us to "Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it might be a diamond in the rough." Shirley Sherrod has lived that charge—investing in people, cultivating promise, and revealing the brilliance in communities too often overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, we gather not merely to laud achievements, though they are many, but to give thanks for a life poured out in pursuit of justice and mercy. We honor Shirley Sherrod for sixty years of faith made visible, for the countless lives she has steadied and lifted, and for the example she sets for all who would work for a fairer America.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join my wife, Vivian and me in celebrating Mrs. Shirley Miller Sherrod—a reformer, a teacher, a friend, and a true steward of hope—and to pledge anew our support for the work she leads so faithfully. May God bless her, keep her, and multiply the harvest of her labors for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
ALEX PONDER

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alex Ponder for her many contributions and 7 years of service to 9th Congressional District residents as Senior Advisor for District Operations and Outreach on my district staff. Alex has spent the formative years of her career serving the community where she grew up.

Alex was born and raised in the district in Park Ridge and interned with my office while studying at Loyola University Chicago. She made such a strong impression that we invited her to join our team full time after graduation. Over the years, she grew into a trusted and capable member of my staff, serving her community with care and consistency.

In her role, Alex was a constant presence across the district. She built lasting relation-

ships with residents and community organizations and helped ensure our office stayed connected to the people we serve. She skillfully led our Congressional Art Competition, working closely with educators and students to build a program that was well run and drew strong participation from schools across the district each year, lifting up young artists and recognizing their work.

Alex was someone my staff knew they could always count on. She stepped into scheduling, communications, and other roles whenever needed, never treating any responsibility as outside her lane. She helped keep track of casework numbers and distribution and was an essential part of our office team during many transitions. Alex began as an intern in our district office and later came to oversee that same program. She selected and managed the interns who assist our office each semester, helping bring new members onto "Team Schakowsky" and teaching them how to advocate for residents and support a congressional office.

Alex knows how to make constituents feel welcome and listened to. She is kind and compassionate, and helped create a warm environment for constituents who called or visited the office.

Alex advocated for constituents in a number of important areas, and handled a high volume of constituent casework. She became the passport expert in our office and was able to cut through red tape to get constituents their passports quickly, alleviating their anxiety during what is often a stressful process. She helped seniors with Social Security and Medicare, and helped constituents resolve problems with the IRS and immigration. Alex made a real, concrete difference in the lives of so many 9th Congressional district residents.

Alex received a well-deserved and special recognition that reads "Agudath Israel of Illinois hereby recognizes the extraordinary efforts of Alex Ponder. Her dedication to the constituents of Illinois' 9th Congressional District, under the leadership of Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY, is truly remarkable. As a global pandemic affected new challenges for countless individuals, you gave personal attention to every person in need. Regardless of the hour or day of the week, and often against the odds, you worked tirelessly to ensure needs were met, emergencies were addressed, and best outcomes achieved. On behalf of Agudath Israel and our entire community, we express profound gratitude for constantly going above and beyond the call of duty."

And a constituent wrote this heartfelt note "Your employee Alex Ponder of the Glenview office has gone way way above and beyond in assisting our daughter and her family this summer . . . I reached out to Alex Ponder and she spent as much time as necessary to guide us through the various documents and notarizations and other forms necessary. She also arranged a meeting with the U.S. Passport Office in Chicago and followed through to be sure all was accomplished efficiently and properly. This is government service at its best, Jan, and I smile every day as I drive past your house, happy to have you as a neighbor as well as our representative! Young professionals such as Alex are worth their weight in gold, and it's a testament to your office that such talent is recruited and retained."

On behalf of the residents of the 9th Congressional District of Illinois, I want to express

my sincere gratitude to Alex Ponder for her years of service. Her work on our team and her commitment to her community reflect her character and values. I am proud of how much she has accomplished here and know that she will continue to succeed and serve the community in the years ahead.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 2026, I was present at the House Appropriations Committee Full Committee markup of the FY2027 Financial Services and General Government bill. We were debating an amendment to authorize Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients to work in the federal government when the vote on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 1189 was

called. This resulted in my absence from the House during one vote on April 22, 2026.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 130, on Ordering the Previous Question.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
OF BILL PARTRIDGE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Bill Partridge. After almost 40 years of service, Oxford Police Chief and Public Safety Director, Bill Partridge, announced his retirement starting May 1, 2026. Chief Partridge joined the Oxford Police Department in 1989 and was first appointed Chief of Police in July 2007.

Chief Partridge served as the president of the Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police

(AACOP) two times, as well as chairman of the AACOP legislative committee, former chairman of the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, advisory board chairman for the Center of Best Practices in Law Enforcement at Jacksonville State University, and vice president of the FBI National Academy Associates—Alabama Chapter.

During his tenure as Chief of Police, Partridge became a known leader in law enforcement across the state of Alabama and helped secure funding and support for the East Metro Alabama Crime Center. This facility is a state-of-the-art building that works in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies in the region, state, and across the country to help fight crime.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary career of my friend, Bill Partridge. I thank him for his service to the State of Alabama.