

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE JAMES H. QUILLEN VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER FOR 120 YEARS OF PROVIDING HEALTHCARE TO OUR NATION'S VETERANS

### HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 7, 2023*

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center, known locally as the Mountain Home VA, as they celebrate 120 years of providing unparalleled healthcare and support to our Nation's brave veterans. This facility, located in the heart of Johnson City, Tennessee, opened its doors to its first veteran patient in 1903, marking the inception of over a century of dedication to those who have valiantly served our Nation.

Throughout its history, Mountain Home VA has stood as a pillar of medical excellence and constant support for veterans from all service branches. As our Nation has advanced to a new global military landscape, this facility has always offered a sanctuary, providing critical, compassionate, and comprehensive care to our Nation's heroes.

Our veterans deserve nothing but the utmost care and respect upon returning to civilian life. For 120 years, the Mountain Home VA has done just that, creating a space that not only attends to the physical well-being of our service members but also provides resources to navigate the oftentimes complex journey of post-service life.

Through generations, the dedicated staff of Mountain Home VA have exemplified an unwavering commitment to ensuring that those who have defended America's freedoms are afforded the dignity, respect, and care they have so rightfully earned. From innovative medical treatments, rehabilitative services, to mental health and wellness initiatives, Mountain Home has been at the forefront of advocating for and addressing the needs of our veterans.

As we commemorate this monumental 120-year legacy, let us pay tribute not only to the institution, but to every nurse, doctor, specialist, administrator, and support staff member who has contributed to making Mountain Home VA a beacon of hope and healing for veterans. Your dedication and service have improved the lives of our veterans and their families, and for that, we owe you a debt of gratitude.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Director Dean Borson and the entire staff of Mountain Home VA. We remain steadfast in our commitment to honor the sacrifice and service of our military men and women, who are forever remembered, valued, and supported.

RECOGNIZING THE UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

### HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 7, 2023*

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize the important work and legacy of the United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania on its 100th anniversary. For a century, this organization has been an integral part of the region, dedicated to supporting and empowering low-income families, seniors, youth and immigrants through a wide range of community-based programs.

The United Neighborhood Centers was chartered in 1923, and since then its members have worked to provide services and create opportunities that empower individuals and build strong, interdependent communities. The organization is known for its "wraparound approach," a strategy of ensuring that their care is so thorough that every emerging need of the community is met. This is achieved through the offering of a comprehensive set of community programs, such as emergency assistance programs, work programs and more, all to guide those in need from their lowest to their highest.

The United Neighborhood Service Development Company creates properties to be used for affordable housing, as well as providing no-cost housing counseling. The organization provides free childcare services, free summer camp opportunities and manages several programs for youth and teens throughout Northeast Pennsylvania. The organization also has undertaken a revitalization project for the town of Pine Brook, dedicating itself to improving the neighborhood through many physical, social and economic projects. Additionally, it provides aid to seniors throughout the region, offering services such as in-person fitness activities as well as grab-and-go meals.

Some of the most significant contributions of the organization to the community are its community education programs. These programs, which include the Citizenship Education program, the Readiness in Skilled Employment Program and the Leaders in Training program, provide youth and adults with the skills needed to help them meet their own goals, secure their independence and transform their communities.

For 100 years, the United Neighborhood Centers has been steadfast in its support for all in the community. Its commitment to the development of Northeast Pennsylvania is an inspiration to all. I am honored to recognize this organization's many achievements and congratulate its members on this momentous milestone.

RECOGNIZING THE EXTRAORDINARY ISRAEL HOUGHTON AHEAD OF HIS LOS ANGELES "REUNION TOUR" PERFORMANCE

### HON. SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 7, 2023*

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary Israel Houghton, a man who has devoted his career to creating music to inspire people and transform their lives. Israel Houghton, credited as Israel & New Breed, is a faith-based singer, songwriter, producer, and worship leader. The city of Los Angeles is fortunate to welcome Israel & New Breed to perform at the Crypto.com Arena tonight alongside his fellow distinguished gospel artists Kirk Franklin, Tamela and David Mann, the Clark Sisters, and Tye Tribbett.

Israel has been actively pursuing a music career since 1997. His immense contributions and dedication to Israel & New Breed have not gone unnoticed, having received six prestigious Grammy Awards. He has also received several other awards and nominations, such as recognitions from the Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards and the Stellar Awards.

Israel has embraced writing songs from the heart. In his music, he discusses the value of focusing not only on ourselves but on a higher purpose, which stems from his belief in how we should worship. That perspective continues to be a motif woven through his songs and has recently been captured in his song "Blessing and Honor," featuring fellow artist Anna Sailors.

Israel remains focused on igniting the soul through song and prioritizes this grounding philosophy over superficial successes.

In addition to building his legacy through his music, Israel has also launched "Faith and Familia," a video series with his wife, Adrienne Eliza Bailon-Houghton, discussing their journey to start their family and the role of faith during challenging times.

Israel has opened up about his faith and how it helped him through difficulties in his childhood and ministry as a worship leader. As a music enthusiast grounded in my own faith. I understand the healing power of music and applaud Israel for the lives he has touched through his work.

Israel continues to be a champion in music ministry and will soon be embarking on his upcoming 2024 "Decades" tour.

I am honored to commemorate the work of Israel Houghton, a fellow Angeleno, and am excited to continue seeing the profound impact music can have on people's lives.

● 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.

RECOGNIZING THE 2023 AMERICAN  
AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION  
STARS OF LIFE HONOREES

**HON. CLIFF BENTZ**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 7, 2023*

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the members of the emergency medical services (EMS) profession who are on the frontlines of providing vital emergency 9–1–1 and interfacility ambulance services. These individuals dedicate their lives to providing often lifesaving medical care and transport services to patients as well as entire communities.

I would like to highlight a very special group of EMS professionals or “Stars of Life” who are being honored this week by the American Ambulance Association. These Stars of Life will be meeting with their members of Congress today and tomorrow and I strongly encourage my colleagues to take the time to chat with these exceptional individuals.

For the past thirty years, the American Ambulance Association has honored those paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), dispatchers and other ambulance service personnel who exemplify what is best about the EMS field. The American Ambulance Association has appropriately designated these individuals as “Stars of Life”. Past Stars of Life have included paramedics and EMTs who were part of evacuation and response efforts to natural disasters, acts of terrorism and public health emergencies.

Every year, the dispatch of an ambulance is the first response to millions of medical emergencies. Often, the survival of a patient is enhanced by the prompt medical attention provided by paramedics and emergency medical technicians prior to the arrival at an emergency department. As a result of the selfless acts of these courageous and devoted professions, the lives of thousands of Americans are saved each year. While these professionals do not expect to receive recognition for their work, they deserve our outmost gratitude.

Of equal importance, this program also pays tribute to those ambulance service personnel whose heroic acts or community service activities may not have made the news, but were just as meaningful to the people they aided. They are truly America’s health care safety net.

I am especially proud of the six Stars of Life from Oregon being recognized this year who work for five different ambulance service organizations and serve Oregonians with pride. They are Carol Boies, Sean Fuller, Victor Hoffer, Daniel Lee, Kristina Ploeger, and Don Thomas. I had the opportunity to meet with Kristina Ploeger from Baker City today and can tell you firsthand that she is an exceptional individual and a fantastic representative of the EMS profession.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED  
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS  
ACT, 2024

SPEECH OF

**HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 2, 2023*

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Chair, today I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 4821, Amendment No. 34.

This amendment highlights the pressing need to address the affordable drinking water crisis afflicting over a million American women, children, and families. Water is a foundational building block for healthy and thriving lives, yet far too many people struggle to afford this basic and essential need. Providing robust funding for the Environmental Programs and Management account will enable the establishment of the much-needed federal low-income water program pilot authorized in section 50108 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and bring us closer to affordable clean water for every American.

For decades, there have been federal assistance programs to help low-income individuals afford essentials such as housing, food, and home energy bills. But no such equivalent program exists for access to water. State-level low-income water assistance has therefore become a critical lifeline for vulnerable families struggling to pay bills and maintain access to water services, yet the lack of federal support hamstringing state efforts to assist all those with limited access to clean drinking water. To address this glaring programmatic gap, IIJA authorized the creation of a rural and low-income water assistance pilot program upon completion of an accompanying needs assessment at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). To date, this needs assessment has not been completed. This needs assessment is critical to the establishment of the water assistance program because it will give the EPA and Congress the insight they need to better understand this important issue and take steps towards the creation of a nationwide, permanent low-income assistance program.

Water bills have become increasingly expensive, placing greater burdens on families that already struggle to afford their water bills. A 2019 survey found that U.S. households in the bottom fifth of the economy spent 12.4 percent of their disposable income on water and sewer services. In recent years, this statistic has increased steadily. No one should have to decide between paying their water bill or buying groceries to feed their family. Historic investments were made in IIJA and it is the duty of Congress and our federal government to ensure these dollars are reaching the people and households it was intended to help. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Administration to help our communities access critical support systems.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF  
MONICA BIBBS

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 7, 2023*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the critically important and remarkable work of Monica Bibbs, who recently stepped down as Director of School Strategies & Logistics at the W.B. Patterson Elementary School, a public school in the District of Columbia.

At W.B. Patterson Elementary School, Ms. Bibbs delivered high-quality work on time, prioritized tasks and managed her time well and demonstrated excellent organizational skills.

Ms. Bibbs began her teaching career in 1987 at H.D. Woodson Senior High School as a mathematics teacher. In 2007, she went to work in central administration as a secondary school numeracy coach and mathematics content specialist.

In 2014, she went to work at W.B. Patterson Elementary School as an Assistant Principal, where she worked collaboratively to achieve team goals and contributed positively to team dynamics, fostering a positive work environment. In 2016, she began serving as Director of School Strategies & Logistics, a role she performed with dedication and a strong work ethic until her retirement this year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Monica Bibbs and her nearly 35 years of incredible service to public schools in D.C.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF OMER  
BALVA

**HON. DAVID J. TRONE**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 7, 2023*

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of dual-American and Israeli citizen—Omer Balva—who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending Israel from terrorism.

Omer grew up in Rockville, Maryland, where he lived until he was 18. Every summer, he traveled to Israel to visit relatives, and quickly fell in love with the beautiful country, where his parents came from. After graduating high school from the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, he moved to Israel to join the Israeli military—ready and willing to step up and defend his new home, his family, and his friends. He finished his three-year IDF service and then enrolled in college. A few weeks ago, Omer traveled to America with his girlfriend to vacation and visit friends—including his best friend, Ethan Missner, and Ethan’s father, Jonathan Missner, whom I consider a friend.

After the heinous terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7th, Omer was recalled from his vacation in America to his unit in order to mobilize and deploy to the Lebanese border to protect against ongoing attacks. On Friday, October 20th—just three days after being deployed—he was killed in action. He was 22 years old.

Omer had big life plans. He was soon to get married, start a family, work at his father’s