

Named by William W.O. Stanfield, the name "Aurora" was chosen to represent the settler's perspective that it "was the dawn of something luminous and beautiful in the new land." Looking back in time, Aurora's history reflects his vision. Through a history that includes a thriving western settler community, stories involving alien sightings and a reported crash and burial site, a Marine Air Base and recent challenges that have led to the construction of their new City Hall, Aurora's story is rich and compelling. However, as we look to the future, it is clear that the opportunities, located at the edge of what is currently the fastest-growing region of our country, remain almost as limitless as any that Mr. Stanfield could have imagined.

Endowed with attentive and responsible leaders, served by a top-rated public school system and located at the juncture of a growing traffic flow, Aurora's dawn with the celebration of this new City Hall is bright with opportunity for both current and future residents.

I am encouraged by the resilience of this community and honored to represent this historic Wise County gem as a part of the 26th Congressional District of Texas. I offer these remarks and a commemorative flag in celebration of the City's current leadership and accomplishments. I share their commitment and I am honored to contribute my efforts toward their success in dutifully representing this community I am blessed to serve on behalf of our Nation's Capitol.

HONORING THE TOWN OF PROSPER'S RESILIENCE AND UNITY
IN REMEMBRANCE OF 9/11

HON. KEITH SELF

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, our Nation witnessed a tragic and unprecedented attack that forever changed the course of history.

Under the leadership of Mayor David Bristol, Police Chief Doug Kowalski, and Fire Chief Stuart Blasingame, the town of Prosper commemorates September 11th each year with a solemn and heartfelt Remembrance Ceremony.

Prosper's commitment to honoring the sacrifices made and the lives lost on September 11, 2001, reflects the enduring spirit of the American people and serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of community, compassion, and service in times of adversity.

It is with much appreciation that I honor the town of Prosper's dedication to preserving the memory of 9/11 and foster a sense of unity and resilience within its community.

HONORING KRISTEN WASHINGTON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kristen Washington: Jacksonian Baker On 'The Great Chocolate Showdown' of Jackson, Mississippi.

If a dessert could describe Kristen Washington, she said it would be a cinnamon roll because that baked good is brown and round, just like her. The Jackson native grew up watching her grandmother, Maple Washington, throw down in the kitchen, and while those skills skipped a few of Kristen's siblings, Maple passed them down to Kristen.

Some of her favorite recipes she learned from her grandmother are her peach cobbler and tea cakes, which fed her a love for dessert in her youth. "Dessert can be your breakfast, lunch and dinner," Washington told the Mississippi Free Press. "You can have a cinnamon roll for breakfast, and it's still a dessert. And it's comfort food. Dessert is a comfort food."

As an adult, Washington always baked in her free time for fun, using her grandmother's old recipe books or following Instagram reels for cake ideas and inspiration. She started selling funnel cakes in 2021, and later that year, she made a birthday cake for her sister-in-law. Washington was hesitant, but her sister-in-law encouraged her to step outside her comfort zone.

That affirming moment led Washington to launch PhatKake's, her at-home baking business, where she creates homemade cakes, funnel cakes, tarts, and other desserts. She named the business after her childhood nickname and runs it while balancing her day job as a personal-care aide.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Kristen Washington for her passion, dedication, and tenacity to serving her community.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED
MILITARY SERVICE OF SENIOR
CHIEF PETTY OFFICER PAUL
HONEA

HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Vietnam Era Veteran, Senior Chief Petty Officer Paul Honea of Chuckey, Tennessee for his distinguished service in the United States Navy.

Senior Chief Honea served in stations across the globe, including Europe, North Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean. He also protected our Nation's homeland, serving on bases in San Diego (CA), Naples (Italy), Norfolk (VA), Charleston (SC), Louisville (KY), and Raleigh (NC)—to name a few.

Senior Chief Honea began his esteemed military career in 1974, where he found his passion as an Optical Repairman. During his tenure, the Senior Chief repaired not only U.S. Navy ships, but also restored local churches and orphanages while on deployment overseas. In 1994, Senior Chief Honea ended his accomplished military career of 20 years.

Following his retirement, together with his wife, Senior Chief Honea commissioned the inaugural Navy Junior R.O.T.C. Program at Sullivan East High School in Bluff City, where he educated aspiring students for another 3 years.

Please join me in thanking American patriot, Senior Chief Petty Officer Paul Honea, for his commitment and honorable service to our great country.

RECOGNIZING KAZAKHSTAN'S
LEADERSHIP IN NUCLEAR NON-
PROLIFERATION AND DISAR-
MAMENT

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, as we marked the 14th annual "International Day Against Nuclear Test" on August 29, I rise to commend the Republic of Kazakhstan's role in nuclear disarmament and its work alongside the United States. I commend Kazakhstan's unwavering commitment to preserving international peace and stability.

Upon the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, the Republic of Kazakhstan inherited the fourth largest nuclear arsenal and the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons test site. In the 4 decades before the fall of the Soviet Union, 456 explosions were carried out at the Semipalatinsk test site, 1 of the largest sites of its kind. These tests caused irreparable damage to human health and the environment, leading to high morbidity and mortality rates among the local population.

Despite global pressure and potential political and strategic advantages that this arsenal would provide for Kazakhstan, the newly formed republic understood the potential political, security, and humanitarian issues that could arise if such a nuclear arsenal were maintained. On August 29, 1991, Kazakhstan made the historic decision to decommission the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons test site. Shortly after, the Nation voluntarily renounced its nuclear weapons arsenal.

Kazakhstan's decision demonstrated a clear commitment to the goals of nuclear security and nonproliferation, which became 1 of its landmark policies and was the first in a series of vital measures aimed at achieving a more peaceful international community. Since the site was closed, the United States has partnered with Kazakhstan to eliminate the Soviet legacy of nuclear test infrastructure from Kazakhstan's territory.

Kazakhstan and the United States implemented the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program—or the "Nunn-Lugar" program—which resulted in the dismantling of nuclear-weapon infrastructure. The states secured and removed residual weapons of mass destruction-related materials and technology from the former nuclear test site. These actions signaled a major shift in the existing global political paradigm and have led to the closure of other major test sites around the world. The Nunn-Lugar decision propelled a collective momentum for the global ban of nuclear testing, and it paved the way for the adoption of the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Today, when the risk of using nuclear weapons has come under increased scrutiny, it is important to remind the global community of the dangers that weapons of mass destruction pose to our safety and future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in reaffirming the United States' commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and working alongside Kazakhstan to strengthen the global regime for the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free future.

HONORING JIMMY SWEET

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and self-motivated leader, Jimmy Sweet. Jimmy Sweet has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve.

Jimmy Sweet was a standout football player and track athlete at Temple and North Vicksburg from 1970 to 1973. Sweet was part of the Temple team that won the 1970 Red Carpet Bowl and Black Big 8 championship, and then scored 18 touchdowns in three seasons at North Vicksburg.

After his playing career, Sweet spent 28 years working for the Vicksburg Police Department and was involved in several community organizations and programs.

Sweet was inducted into the 2022 Vicksburg Warren School District Athletic Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jimmy Sweet for his passion and dedication to the Vicksburg Warren School District and City of Vicksburg.

RECOGNIZING THE CONFERENCE
OF WESTERN WAYNE**HON. RASHIDA TLAI**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Ms. TLAI. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize the Conference of Western Wayne, a bipartisan organization that serves to connect the 18-member communities of western Wayne County in Michigan as they celebrate 45 years of service.

The Conference of Western Wayne was founded in 1978 with the purpose of coordinating 911 services across western Wayne County. Beyond connecting on the day-to-day coordination of emergency response, the Conference of Western Wayne provides a monthly meeting and creates stronger connections across the communities of western Wayne County. These monthly meetings, which are held in rotating locations across the county, are held with the purpose of creating strong connections across communities and a way for community leaders to exchange ideas and resources to improve the quality of life for all residents.

Whether it's helping to create opportunities for residents to engage or coming together to improve services, the Conference of Western Wayne has been an outstanding hub point and partner. We offer gratitude and wish them well on their 45 years of service.

CELEBRATING THE OPENING OF
THE NEW CITY DOGS & CITY
KITTIES RESCUE CENTER**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize City Dogs & City Kitties Rescue and

its new Operations and Intake Center in the District of Columbia, which opens on September 18, 2023.

Founded in 2011, City Dogs & City Kitties Rescue takes in dogs and cats from overcrowded shelters. Over the past 12 years, City Dogs & City Kitties Rescue has saved over 8,700 dogs and cats. Many of these dogs and cats were rescued from high-kill shelters, where resources are so limited that animals are frequently euthanized.

City Dogs & City Kitties Rescue has been widely acknowledged by the community for its work in animal welfare. The Washington City Paper has honored City Dogs & City Kitties Rescue numerous times, awarding it the title of Best Nonprofit in D.C. in 2022 and awarding its annual online auction the best charity event of 2023.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to celebrate the opening of City Dogs & City Kitties Rescue's new building in the District of Columbia and recognize its many years of providing a lifeline to dogs and cats in need of a home.

HONORING WILLIE G. OWENS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and self-motivated leader, Fire Chief Willie G. Owens.

Chief Willie G. Owens is the leader of the Jackson Fire Department, and he has 32 years with the department. He is a native of Belzoni, Mississippi, where he attended McNair High School and enrolled in Jackson State University in 1970. He received a B.S. degree in Health & Physical Education from Jackson State in 1972. In 1974, he began a career with the Jackson Fire Department. In 1979, he went back to Jackson State University and received a degree in Fire Science Technology.

The City of Jackson entered a Consent Decree with the Federal Government for racial discrimination in 1973, and therefore, hired an all-black class the next year that produced two Fire Chiefs, with Chief Owens being one of them.

Chief Owens has made many accomplishments since becoming fire chief. He extended the promotional list from one to two years, decreased the age limit from 21 to 18 to become a firefighter, establish a fire science program in the Jackson Public School System, and increased the number of firefighters to its station.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Fire Chief Willie Owens for his dedication to the City of Jackson.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE INCORPORATION
OF THE CITY OF HOLYOKE**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a significant milestone in the illustrious history

of our district—the 150th anniversary of Holyoke's incorporation. Such a special occasion necessitates pausing and reflecting upon our shared heritage, the indomitable spirit of our forebears, and the bright future that lies ahead.

Since its incorporation in 1872, the City of Holyoke has stood as a beacon of progress, resilience, and community. Pioneers, innovators, and everyday heroes have walked its streets, contributing to its tapestry of stories that resonates with the promise of the American Dream. It was here that the Connecticut River powered the Paper City, symbolizing not just an industrial triumph but also the ceaseless flow of ideas, culture, and determination that defines Holyoke.

Throughout these 150 years, we have seen the city transform, adapt, and grow. From the humming mills to the thriving arts and cultural institutions, Holyoke has always been a place where dreams are realized, and challenges are surmounted. It is the dedication, hard work, and vision of countless individuals, families, and institutions that have carried Holyoke forward, making it a cherished gem in Massachusetts' First District.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Holyoke on this sesquicentennial celebration. May we continue to appreciate our shared history and look ahead with optimism, passion, and a commitment to making Holyoke's future even brighter than its storied past.

RECOGNIZING THE COUNTY OF
MERRIMACK, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 200TH
ANNIVERSARY**HON. ANN M. KUSTER**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Merrimack County in New Hampshire's Second Congressional District celebrating 200 years since its founding. For two centuries, Merrimack County has offered a wonderful place for families, businesses, and more to call home.

Merrimack County, named for the Merrimack River, was organized in Concord 1823. It was formed by taking towns from northern Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties to create something new, a spirit of innovation that continues to this day. Nearly 154,000 people call Merrimack County home. The County has two cities and 25 towns, including our state capital, Concord. Merrimack is the third-largest county in our state by land area. The highest point of the County is Mount Kearsarge, at 2,937 feet.

A dedication ceremony with special guest speakers, barbeque meals, a tree planting, musical presentations by the Concord Community Music School, a K-9 demonstration, informational booths, a youth activity corner, 'touch-a-truck,' and raffles will all be part of the events commemorating the occasion.

Today and every day, I am proud to call Merrimack County home. Here's to many more years.

On behalf of New Hampshire's Second Congressional District, my best wishes to all gathering for Merrimack County's 200th community