

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
KITTIIES 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

celebration. The leaders and residents of Merrimack County are part of what makes the Granite State such a special place to live, work, and raise a family.

HONORING AURELIA JONES-TAYLOR

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, Aurelia Jones-Taylor. Aurelia has been a champion of healthcare and community service.

Born and reared in Hollandale, MS, Aurelia has directed Aaron E. Henry for close to thirty years. During her tenure, she has increased the number of service sites from 2 to 10 and developed, implemented, and expanded on several community and statewide economic and community development initiatives, including programs to address health disparities in chronic diseases, pharmaceutical access, local network development, workforce development, emergency room diversion initiatives, community health education initiatives, health and wellness programs and rural general public transportation.

Aurelia has oversight over all aspects of the corporation including the Delta Area Rural Transit System, Ryan White Part C and the Mississippi Children's Health Project. Aurelia has presented at various national and state conferences and her projects have been featured in Delta Business Journal, Mahogany Magazine, Centers for Disease Control, National Association of Community Health Centers, AARP and the Journal of the Community Transportation Association of America, to name a few. She earned a BS Degree from Tougaloo College and a MBA from Jackson State University.

Aurelia's outlook and passion for good, decent health has had a profound impact on not only Clarksdale, Mississippi, but the surrounding communities as well. Her continuous progress that as a community and state are making enforces the fact that she is focused on protecting the well-being of the community and that their health is valued.

Aurelia is a recipient of the coveted John Gilbert Award presented by the National Association of Community Health Centers in 2003, Executive Director of the Year for Mississippi Primary Health Care Association, The Aaron Shirley Disguised Indigent Care Award and many others. Aurelia served two terms as president of the Mississippi Primary Health Care Association, member of the National Rural Health Task Force, Geiger Gibson Leadership Advisory Group at George Washington University and on several local and state boards and committees.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Aurelia Jones-Taylor for her outstanding dedication, compassion and advocacy in her community. Her selfless service to the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Center, her community, Rural MS Delta Region and the State of Mississippi are commended.

ACCURATELY COUNTING RISK ELIMINATION SOLUTIONS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1567, the Accurately Counting Risk Elimination Solutions (ACRES) Act of 2023.

Drought conditions and invasive grasses throughout the country in recent years have compounded the threat of wildfires, and the recent wildfires on Maui serve as a tragic reminder of how serious the risks are. These wildfires devastated a vibrant community and serve as a stark warning sign of the reality of such risks.

Federal lands are particularly vulnerable to wildfires, as they alone experience a fifth of the country's wildfires every year. To combat this danger, the ACRES Act will help mitigate the risk of wildfires across the country by mandating that our Department of Agriculture and Department of the Interior conduct more accurate risk assessment tracking of dry invasive grasses on our federal lands. This will help prevent wildfires before they start. This legislation will also mandate that data collection processes involved in wildfire risk assessments be updated and standardized across both departments to ensure that their cooperation will be seamless and efficient.

Each department will also be required to submit a report of the number of acres of federal lands that underwent a risk assessment every year and provide critical information on wildland-urban interface and wildfire risk. The ACRES Act will add an extra layer of oversight and public transparency to ensure the accuracy of wildfire risk assessments, allowing for more effective wildfire prevention.

This legislation will be especially helpful in Hawaii, which has large public land holdings and currently suffers from a higher risk of wildfires due to vast swaths of land being overrun by dry invasive grasses, directly linking to fires across my state every year. This commonsense bill will enable us to reduce hazardous fuels and protect our communities from this threat.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to help advance smart data collection and protect our public lands from wildfire by supporting this bill.

HONORING HISPANIC HERITAGE
MONTH 2023

HON. FRANK J. MRVAN

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month and its 2023 theme, Latinos: Driving Prosperity, Power, and Progress in America. From September 15, 2023, through October 15, 2023, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, the people of the United States will once again celebrate the cultures, traditions, and the many outstanding contributions that Hispanic Americans have made throughout our country's history.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins each year on September 15 and recognizes the anniversaries of the independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile observe their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Since its establishment as National Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968, which later became National Hispanic Heritage Month in 1988, Americans have taken this time to reflect on the remarkable efforts of generations of Hispanic Americans that have helped to create and build our prosperous Nation.

America's success is reliant upon the rich heritage and cultural diversity of its people. This month, and always, we remember and honor the many Hispanic leaders and members of our communities throughout history who have added to the success of the United States in every facet of our society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. For their many noteworthy contributions, which have been vital in shaping our great Nation, the Hispanic community is worthy of our honor and praise.

HONORING CHAQUINA GRIFFIN
TAYLOR

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, Chaquina Griffin Taylor. She has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve.

Chaquina Griffin Taylor, the youngest of four siblings, is the daughter of Willie Earl Griffin and Jacqueline Griffin. She spent her formative years growing up in Lambert, MS. Mrs. Taylor currently serves as the Collective Impact Coordinator at Delta State University, focusing on Quitman County.

Mrs. Taylor is a proud graduate of Madison Shannon Palmer High School. She furthered her education at the illustrious Tougaloo College, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Mrs. Taylor holds a Master of Science in Psychology with specializations in Child Adolescent Development and Applied Behavior Analysis. She is a certified Meditation Mindfulness Teacher, Trainer, and Positive Psychology Practitioner.

Mrs. Taylor began her career working in corrections at an all-male facility providing substance abuse services and cognitive behavior therapy to the inmate population (2008–2017). While working in corrections, Mrs. Taylor revamped the Alcohol Anonymous program, implemented a Victim's Impact program, taught orientation classes, and trained new managers on the substance abuse curriculum. Mrs. Taylor has also been working in higher education since 2017. At Coahoma Community College, she was appointed the MIBEST College and Career Navigator (2017–2021), providing wrap-around services to the non-traditional student population. She continues to serve as an adjunct Psychology Instructor.

Mrs. Taylor is an advocate for education. She is a life learner and a natural leader. Mrs. Taylor has served as the Quitman County