

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

School District P-16 Council president. She is a Samberg Leadership Maximizer completer. In addition, she completed the Mississippi Community College Policy Fellows Program and the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy. Mrs. Taylor obtained her Quality Matters Online Teaching Certification as well. Additionally, she is a dedicated member of esteemed professional organizations, including the American Psychological Association (APA), the National Education Association (NEA), and the Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE).

Last and most important, Mrs. Taylor is Michael Taylor's wife and Scholar Taylor's mother. She has a bonus daughter named Mariah Taylor. She is an active member of Power House Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Robert Griffin, Jr., where she serves as the church treasurer. Mrs. Taylor is passionate about helping others. She aspires to inspire. Her motto is "You are the pilot of your life, so take control."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Chaquina Griffin Taylor for her contributions and service to her community.

**SALUTING A CENTENNIAL HERO:  
HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY  
OF A WWII VETERAN**

**HON. KEITH SELF**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 13, 2023*

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor Dr. Howard Riley of Greenville, Texas, who recently marked his 100th birthday on August 24, 2023.

Dr. Howard Riley is a true example of courage, sacrifice, and commitment. He served our Nation with honor as a Corporal in the Army Air Forces during World War II, from December 9, 1942, to February 18, 1946, where he worked diligently as a radio operator. His dedication to our Nation and its values extended far beyond his military service, as he continued to contribute to the betterment of our society in the post-war years.

Dr. Howard Riley serves as both an inspiring testament to the resilience of the human spirit and a living reminder of the sacrifices made by the Greatest Generation in the pursuit of freedom. For this, we extend our eternal gratitude.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. ANN M. KUSTER**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 13, 2023*

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for one vote during the vote series last night. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on Roll Call No. 383.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. LIZZIE FLETCHER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 13, 2023*

Mrs. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, I missed the first vote yesterday due to a scheduling conflict. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 383.

**HONORING DR. WILLIE J. REECE,  
JR.**

**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 remarkable unsung hero, Dr. Willie J. Reece, Jr.

Dr. Willie J. Reece, Jr. is a native of Grenada, MS and the youngest of six children. His parents Willie Reece, Sr. and the late Sharon Seals Reece are his biggest inspirations.

Dr. Reece enjoys singing and is actively involved as a member at Greater Faith MB Church under the leadership of Pastor Alvin D. Brown, Sr.

Dr. Reece graduated from Grenada High School in 2010 and received his Bachelor of Art degree in psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2014.

Later, he obtained two master's degrees from Belhaven University—Master of Art in Teaching (2016) and Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction (2018).

In 2019, Dr. Reece completed an educational leadership degree, and he completed the doctor of education program in educational leadership in 2023.

Dr. Reece has completed eight years of experience in education in the roles of teacher, lead teacher, MTSS coordinator, curriculum specialist, and principal.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Willie J. Reece, Jr. for his dedication and tenacity to serving his community and desire to be a light that shines even in his dark times.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON**

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 13, 2023*

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 385, I mistakenly voted NAY when I intended to vote YEA.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. JENNIFER WEXTON**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 13, 2023*

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not able to be present for the Roll Call vote on H.R. 3152. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 383.

**HONORING LARRY BENFORD**

**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, Pastor Larry Benford. He has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve.

Pastor Larry Benford surrendered his heart to God at a very young age and he has been declaring the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ since then. A native of Leland, Pastor Benford graduated from Leland High School and Mississippi Valley State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in environmental health with a minor in Chemistry. He also has received training from The University of Illinois at Chicago as well as formal Biblical tutelage from Lifeway Christian and New Orleans Theological Seminary.

Pastor Benford is an anointed leader. With pastoral services expanding over two decades, through the help of the Holy Spirit, he has served as Deacon, Sunday School Director, Assistant Pastor, and Pastor at Greater Springfield, Victory Temple and Mount Carmel Churches, respectively.

As pastor of Living Word Fellowship Church since October 10, 1999, he has always taken the stance that the Word must be taught with passion and boldness—without compromise—in order that the lost will be saved, and the saved will be strengthened.

Growing together in the Word of God, Pastor Larry and First Lady Wanda Benford are consummate students of the Word and outspoken believers in its ability to change lives for the better. Pastor Larry and First Lady Wanda Benford's greatest desire is that others would develop an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord.

Pastor Larry and First Lady Wanda Benford have been married for 32 years. To this union, they have been blessed with 3 daughters, Keyna, Leslie and Ariel and 3 grandchildren, La'Kya, Kylar and Gervase.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Larry Benford for his passion and dedication to serving the Lord, his members, and his community.

**RECOGNIZING JIM WEBER  
RETIREMENT**

**HON. RICK LARSEN**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 13, 2023*

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jim Weber who recently retired after a 47-year career at the Port of Everett. A native of Marysville, Washington, Jim began working at the Port's marina as a seasonal employee while attending Marysville-Pilchuck High School. Jim did whatever needed to be done—pushing a broom, checking moorings and taking meter readings. Four years later, he landed a full-time job with the maintenance team. Over the next 43 years, Jim worked his way up at the marina—from maintenance journeyman to maintenance foreman to operations director. His hard work and