

It is no surprise, as one of 21 siblings and the second eldest, that she was a mother and nurturer to many. She brought life and love to every child and family that passed through her and her beloved husband Evans' childcare center in their home, J.P. Family Childcare, in the 1970s. She was passionate about education, and at the age of 60, she returned to school, earning a degree and graduating with a 3.8 GPA.

While Mrs. James laid in hospice, the true impact of the love she imparted to the city was on full display, and nurses were quoted saying she had no less than 300 visitors.

Her daughter Denella said her mother often would invoke the lyrics of "It Is Well With My Soul," a gospel hymn whose words include: "Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul."

She is survived by the great love of her life, Evan, by her daughters, Denella, Rosemarie, and Debby, and 10 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

#### HONORING MUKIYA BAKER-GOMEZ

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a woman, leader, mentor, and brilliant strategist on whose shoulders so many electoral firsts stand on, including myself, Mukiya Baker-Gomez.

In 2018, I became the first person of color to represent the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the House of Representatives in the Commonwealth's 230-year history. That foundation, that possibility, the literal electoral blueprint to winning elections in Boston and building coalitions, began with Mukiya Baker-Gomez. Her political acumen and shrewd counsel were enviable, and her commitment to community unwavering and unshakeable, especially to Black people.

Her every move and impact outside of politics has been even greater. She played a key role in an inclusive economy, fighting to ensure that contractors of color would be prioritized. She was a historymaker, although she never chased a title.

It was important to me to eulogize her because I will not have her contributions erased or unacknowledged.

I thank Mukiya for everything. I love and miss her.

She is survived by the love of her life, Kevin; her loving children, Talisha and Kenyatta; her siblings; and a host of family by blood and by bond.

I thank Mukiya for her sacrifice and tenacity and for always speaking truth to power.

#### STANDING STRONG IN SUPPORT OF JAPAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. WILLIAMS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Mr. Speaker, for over 70 years, the United States and Japan have been bound together by a steadfast and loyal alli-

ance. Our nations have come together in decades of peace and cooperation.

Today, however, our Japanese allies are facing mounting threats. China is ramping up its expansionist efforts, and the tyrannical regime of North Korea continues to develop its arsenal of nuclear weapons and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, which pose a direct threat to the civilian population of Japan.

In this increasingly unstable and bellicose environment, it has never been more important for the United States to stand strong in support of Japan.

North Korea, in particular, is guilty of grave human rights abuses against Japanese citizens. Since the 1970s, North Korea has covertly abducted 17 Japanese citizens from the homeland islands, some while they slept in their beds. In addition to these 17 officially recognized abductees, there are numerous other cases of missing Japanese citizens for whom the possibility of having been abducted and taken to North Korea simply can't be ruled out. The agony of not knowing haunts these families, and the fear of abductions in the night from the sea has haunted coastal communities in Japan for decades.

Every single one of these abductions is a horrific tragedy that has caused untold suffering. Perhaps even more disturbing is North Korea's heartless and transparent deception concerning the status of these victims. For example, while North Korea claims eight of these abductees have died from causes like suicide, heart attacks, and traffic accidents inside North Korea, the regime has never produced any objectively verifiable evidence of their deaths to the families who just want to know.

The North Koreans have conveniently claimed that the remains of some of the abductees were washed away in floods. They have even handed over alleged abductee remains to Japan only for the DNA testing to later show that these alleged remains do not match the identities of the abducted victims. It is unimaginably cruel.

North Korea's treatment of Japan and its citizens is nothing short of evil and an inhuman crime. America doesn't allow its allies to be bullied. That is why I introduced H. Res. 620, a resolution that seeks to carry out justice for the Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea. This resolution accomplishes three major goals.

First, it provides official congressional recognition of the horrific abductions of Japanese citizens by the North Koreans. This includes an acknowledgment that North Korea has violated the basic human rights of these Japanese citizens and that only 5 of the 17 officially recognized abductees have been returned to Japan.

Second, this resolution urges North Korea to take action on rectifying these abuses. It calls upon North Korea to release all foreign abducted nationals, including those from Japan. It also

urges North Korea to return the remains of all deceased abductees, provide information about their demise, and make reparations for these crimes.

Lastly, the resolution reaffirms Congress' commitment to our alliance with Japan and to American strength abroad. When America is weak, our enemies are empowered; our allies are endangered; and our national security is put at risk. When America is strong, we hold our enemies accountable for their actions; we defend our allies; and we keep our country safe.

The alliance with Japan is the bedrock of America's influence in Asia and our security. Strong and unapologetic support for Japan is an essential component of American foreign policy. We in Congress must all speak as one and stand with Japan. We will not let such a faithful and crucial ally be pushed around by a tyrannical and rogue regime.

I am incredibly proud to introduce this resolution. I thank Congresswoman TOKUDA for co-leading this bipartisan effort.

Stop for a moment and remember the suffering of these families who have had their family members taken from them without any knowledge of their well-being.

#### HISTORY OF CIVIL RIGHTS ABUSES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUARTE). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce my first piece of legislation, the JUST Act.

When the United States Department of Agriculture was established by President Lincoln in 1862, it reflected a recognition of the strategic importance of agriculture in the Nation's development. It aimed to address the needs of farmers, promote scientific advancements in agriculture, and contribute to rural development. However, racism perpetuated by the rules and the laws of Jim Crow remained strong.

This was in the early years of the Civil War. Sixty-one years later, we remember in 1923 the massacre, the removal of Black, prosperous farmers in Rosewood, Florida, where Black farmers were taken off of their land.

In the 1920s, 30 percent of America's families lived in rural America on farmlands. The USDA was created to provide a safety net for America's farmers, ranchers, and growers, which included assistance for struggling industries, disaster assistance, crop insurance, technical assistance, access to credit, and help for producers to implement conservation practices.

For decades, the USDA has had an unfortunate and checkered history regarding civil rights, manifesting most notably in discriminatory lending practices, unequal program access, civil rights violations, land loss, and

limited representation. Reports dating back to the 1960s have found discrimination at the USDA in both program delivery and the treatment of its employees of African-American descent.

Today, USDA continues to be the subject of a number of lawsuits brought by minority farmers and ranchers alleging discrimination. This reputation is so pervasive that the USDA has been called the last plantation on numerous occasions.

When Secretary Tom Vilsack began his tenure as Secretary of Agriculture in 2009, he promised a new era of civil rights at the USDA. I applaud him for his recognition, honesty, candor, and willingness to confront a very hard truth, not fixing the blame but trying to fix the problem to make sure that America's agricultural access, resources, and industry would be open to all.

At that time, there were over 14,000 unresolved discrimination complaints in the Department of Agriculture. The discrimination perpetuated through USDA's farm lending programs, undermining Black farmers' ability to continue their operations during the 20th century, resulting in over 900,000 Black farmers losing their lands from the people who were originally the custodians of this land. African Americans who had been kidnapped, captured, and enslaved and who made cotton king. When they had the opportunity to farm, the USDA had turned their back on these family farmers.

Between 1920 and 1997, African-American farmers had declined by 98 percent because of government policy. Right here, down Pennsylvania Avenue, in 1925, we remember when the Ku Klux Klan was a mainstream organization. We remember that when President Harding died in Indiana, there was a Klan rally at the fairgrounds commemorating his death. That ghost still lingered on.

Contemporary data shows that African Americans still account for only 1.4 percent of the country's 3.4 million producers. Equity issues remain in program delivery to this very day.

An NPR analysis most recently found that, in 2022, only 36 percent of Black farmers received direct loans from USDA while their White counterparts received 72 percent loan acceptance. Perhaps some of the biggest gaps in the loan demographics can also be seen in the rejection numbers, where 16 percent of Black farmers are rejected. The highest corresponding figure for White farmers was 4 percent. Forty-eight percent of Black farmers withdrew their applications in frustration, and that number corresponds with Asian Americans, compared to only 24 percent of those identifying as Caucasian.

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While efforts are underway to address this current crisis through the Inflation Reduction Act, and other measures, there must be a process in place to clarify and bolster civil rights protections at the USDA.

The Just USDA Standards and Transparency Act of 2023, 100 years after Rosewood, would correct this.

GOD REST YE MERRY,  
GENTLEMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as Christmastime approaches, I rise to share the history of one of the most beloved carols—and there are more to come.

"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen."

The first line means, gentlemen, may God keep you in good spirits—a blessing.

Immensely popular throughout its history, this carol even merits a mention by Charles Dickens in his famous tale, "A Christmas Carol." It is also a very old carol and was almost certainly sung by wandering groups of singers called waits. In Merrie Olde England, music was an important part of everyday life. Minstrels carried the news of the day from town to town and were often handsomely rewarded for their efforts.

In many towns, the waits played the role of town criers, singing the hours of the day and reporting local happenings. Christmastime kept them especially busy. As they strolled through the snowy streets, they told the story of the nativity in song, adding to the festive atmosphere. Townspeople would show their appreciation by giving the singers money or food.

These are the words of that famous carol:

God rest ye merry, gentlemen; let nothing you dismay.

Remember, Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day.

To save us all from Satan's power, when we were gone astray.

○tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.

○tidings of comfort and joy.

In Bethlehem, in Israel, this blessed babe was born,

And laid within a manger upon this blessed morn;

The which His mother Mary did nothing take in scorn.

○tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.

○tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our Heavenly Father, a blessed angel came;

And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same;

How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.

○tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.

○tidings of comfort and joy.

I hope that you keep this history in mind of this beautiful song as you celebrate during the holiday season.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of central Texas, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday.

EXPULSION OF REPRESENTATIVE  
GEORGE SANTOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on this solemn occasion to urge my colleagues to take the rare step of exercising the expulsion clause of the United States Constitution.

Congressman GEORGE SANTOS has failed to uphold the principles of scrupulous, selfless public service. He has violated the law and he has violated this body's ethics rules.

As a member of the Ethics Committee, I can report that the evidence against him is substantial and damning. I can also report that there was no rush to judgment.

During the course of our investigation, the Ethics Committee authorized 37 subpoenas, issued 43 requests for information, obtained and reviewed over 172,000 pages of documents, interviewed over 40 witnesses, and reviewed relevant public information, including the Federal indictments in the criminal case in New York.

Our bipartisan investigation revealed that he laundered \$50,000 of his campaign donors' money through two personal accounts and spent it on himself on designer clothes, a car payment, a credit card, and personal debts.

He cheated the government out of \$24,000 in unemployment benefits during the pandemic when he was earning a salary of \$120,000 from an investment firm.

He lied and said he loaned his unsuccessful campaign for Congress over \$80,000, and repaid himself for the fictitious loan, netting a personal profit of \$27,000.

In the second—this time successful campaign for Congress—he lied again, this time to the tune of \$500,000.

He also transferred and hid from the FEC a sum of \$50,000 from his congressional campaign to his State Political Action Committee. He spent over \$40,000 of campaign funds on personal expenses, like expensive travel and meals, casino stays, an adult website, and cosmetic procedures, personally enriching himself at his donors' expense—all of this on top of his constant lying about his resume and his family history.

There are charges of fraud, identity theft, credit card skimming, and swindling a disabled veteran.

In short, the evidence of criminal and ethical violations is extensive and overwhelming.

Mr. SANTOS has complained that he has not received due process. He also suggested that he was unaware of the fraud and misconduct, apparently trying to shift the blame to his treasurer and others.

Mr. SANTOS worked closely with his treasurer, who pled guilty just last month to her role in this scheme. The text messages they exchanged about the fake loans show that he was a knowing and active participant in the misconduct.

The campaign staffers we interviewed as part of our investigation also made clear that he was certainly aware of the campaign's financial abuses.