

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### HONORING THE LIFE OF KEITH KING

#### HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor the life, legacy, and faith of Keith King, who died of pancreatic cancer on February 3, 2024, at the age of 75. Keith was a champion for the Pikes Peak region as a successful and generous business entrepreneur, elected official, and advocate for school choice and charter schools. Keith had a tremendous impact on those around him, but it was only possible because he was driven and directed by his love for Jesus Christ and his family. Keith King was truly a giant in advancing policies that helped families, children, schools, and the state of Colorado. In addition to being a personal colleague in the Colorado legislature for seven years and a brother in Christ, Keith was my friend.

Born in Tekoa, Washington, Keith moved to Colorado and completed his bachelor's degree at Colorado State University, Pueblo in industrial education in 1970. He continued his education at Oregon State University in 1976 with a master's degree in vocational education. It was through his studies that his already budding desire to see children succeed in school and have as many education choices as possible available to them bloomed. Keith served on the Cheyenne Mountain School board from 1991 to 1995; and was president of Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, which he co-founded, from 1995 to 1998. Keith also started Colorado Springs Early Colleges and Colorado Early Colleges which provided high schoolers the opportunity to take college classes and receive job training. Education choice and specifically the emergence and growth of charter schools in Colorado became one of Keith's main passions in his legislative career.

First elected to the Colorado House of Representatives in 1999, Keith's first year in the legislature showed immediate results. During his first session in office, Keith was the lead sponsor of two bills that improved charter school structures and operations that were signed into law. This impressive success record was only the beginning of Keith's impact on Colorado. Keith sponsored the annual school finance act three times and sponsored the landmark College Opportunity Fund which created substantial change to the funding system for public colleges and universities.

Keith and his wife Sandi of more than fifty years enjoyed the blessings of their sons Jeremy and Brandon, their families, and their five grandchildren. A devoted husband and Christian, Keith embodied 1 Corinthians 16:13–14 in every way that he lived his life, especially in the public square as a legislator: "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith, be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love."

Education remains one of the most important pillars of our society today. Keith recog-

nized that high-quality and well-funded education gave each child the best chance at an impactful life. Keith's faith and his family provided Keith with his "North Star" as he used his gifts and abilities to make life better for all of those around him. Even into his later years, Keith was on campus at local high schools teaching and coaching basketball. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in Congress join me in remembering and honoring the life of a faithful man in Keith King whose impact in the Pikes Peak region will be felt for the rest of time.

### HONORING ERNA JE'NEEN FRENCH

#### HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I, along with the people of St. Louis, rise to honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Erna Je'Neen French. Erna was a giant in the gospel community, a mother, grandmother, and sister who dedicated her life to spreading the joy and love of God through her powerful voice.

Erna professed her devotion to Jesus Christ at the early age of five, and she knew she would one day be a famous gospel singer. Inspired by her mother Lavera, gospel music was always central to Erna's life. Erna was a scholar of spiritual hymns, and she understood the weight those verses carried. Before the age of 12, Erna recorded three national gospel records with the Thomas A. Dorsey National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses under the St. Louis Gospel Choral Union, the O'Neal Twins, and the Stan Lee Gospel Music Workshop. Later in her life, Erna recorded with numerous artists and ministries nationally and internationally and was a member of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, the Sanctified POSSE, GEMCA, Dello Thedford and the Gospel Symphonic Choir, Rusty Watson, One Voice, the Psalms of David, and countless other ministries. In 2018, Erna accomplished a lifelong dream releasing her project "Always" with the help of Levi Too King.

A student of the University City School District, she was a proud member of the graduating class of 1985. In 1986, Erna began a career as a professional driver. She drove school buses until 1998 when she joined the Bistate Development Agency/Metro St. Louis Transit Agency, from which she retired in 2021.

Most importantly, Erna loved spending time with her family. Her daughter Alysha De'Nise French and grandson CJ were the lights of her life. Erna shared her deep passion for gospel music with her older sister, Monica. I offer my deepest condolences on behalf of Missouri's First District to Erna's entire family and all those who loved her.

### NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH

#### HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the more than 160,000 Black-owned employer businesses in the U.S. during National Entrepreneurship Week.

Black businessowners experience pervasive barriers to accessing capital—more than any other demographic.

According to the Alliance for Entrepreneurial Equity, two-thirds of Black employers seek financing to expand business operations, yet half of them are denied loans and lines of credit.

Micael Habte is the owner of Upper Cup Coffee, an Eritrean-based coffee shop and wholesale coffee supplier located in the Old Towne East neighborhood of Columbus. Despite capital challenges due to COVID-19, today Micael is running two cafes, and a coffee kiosk, and has even expanded his roasting facility.

I'm proud of the fortitude businessowners like Micael have displayed, and I urge my colleagues to closely consider the challenges faced by Black entrepreneurs.

We must work together to build a stronger, more equitable economy for all.

### GRATITUDE TO CITIZEN ADVOCATES

#### HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to include in the RECORD an important article from consumer advocate, lawyer, and author Ralph Nader that celebrate the determination and courage of citizen activists like Nadia Milleron. Nadia's daughter, Samya Rose Stumo, tragically died in a plane crash when the defective Boeing 737 Max she was in, crashed in Ethiopia on March 10, 2019, killing all 156 people on board. Nadia was determined to fight for justice, and successfully pushed for action to ensure that the families of victims of such tragedies could collect punitive damages. Her story is an inspiration that should be read by all as a reminder that in our democracy, one person truly can make a difference.

THAT LADY FROM NEW ENGLAND WHO SHAMED US ALL

(Ralph Nader)

The mass media is reluctant to recognize civic heroes unless they display physical bravery such as rushing into a burning building to save a child. The media also lavishes vast coverage on sports heroes and entertainers.

• 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.

Unnoticed by the mass media was how it came about that the Illinois legislature, overcome by corporate lobbyists, passed legislation allowing punitive damages for wrongful death disasters, and sent the bill to Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker who signed it last Friday.

In the words of one state lawmaker, this effort started with “that lady from New England who drove down here (to Springfield, Illinois) and shamed us all.” That lady was my niece Nadia Milleron, who lost her daughter Samya Rose Stumo—an emerging leader in global health—to the defective Boeing 737 Max that crashed in Ethiopia on March 10, 2019, killing all 156 people on board. (Earlier on October 29, 2018, a similar also new Boeing 737 Max crashed off Indonesia’s coast, killing all 189 passengers and crew.)

Nadia was determined that families in the future who lost their loved ones to reckless corporate actions and crimes would not be told by Illinois courts that, were people rendered disabled, they could collect punitive damages—but not if their lives were taken. The cruel absurdity of this perverse rule that lets companies escape punitive damages under the law of torts (wrongful injuries) if their recklessness or greed kills their victims, but not if they injure them, was too much for Nadia to tolerate.

Driven by her love of Samya and her determination to end this gross injustice, she spent months away from her Massachusetts home in 2022 getting appointments with every Illinois Assembly person—177 of them—to plead her case in person. None of the naysayers she encountered in the lobbying circles around the legislature deterred her, not even some plaintiff trial lawyers.

By the sheer force of her legal and factual arguments, her moral authority and a few senior political advisors in Chicago, she laid the groundwork for action earlier last year. The Illinois Wrongful Death Act was championed by a young African-American state lawmaker, Rep. La Shawn K. Ford. Once it started moving through the Assembly (with little media attention) it gained momentum among the new Assembly leadership that carried through to the new leadership of the State Senate. Both legislative Houses are controlled by Democrats.

Nadia came to this challenge in Illinois, where the Stumo family civil tort litigation against Boeing is pending, with experience in battling the giant Boeing corporation’s power to get its way in Washington, DC. For months after Boeing’s homicides in Ethiopia (See, September 16, 2020, News Release from the House Committee on Transportation), Nadia and her husband Mike (both non-practicing lawyers), with the help of their two articulate sons, and other relentless, bereaved families, worked the corridors and offices of Congress, pressing for public hearings and legislation. Their efforts, punctuated by public demonstrations, culminated in the passage of federal legislation to start the process of strengthening air safety regulations.

The Stumos and their family network also focused on the derelict FAA which, over the years, had transformed itself from a supposed aviation safety regulator to a weak, consultant’s role. The agency literally delegated regulatory decisions and inspections to deputized Boeing employees on the factory floor and in the design offices. Boeing and other aircraft manufacturers made sure that Congress did not object and indeed had Congress facilitate this delegation, including by keeping the FAA’s regulatory budget and skilled staff too small to regulate directly and forcefully.

Nonetheless, with astute and newsworthy press conferences and accurate responsiveness to media inquiries, the families pushed

the FAA to be a little more hands-on and probing than it was up to 2019.

When the punitive damage bill passed the Illinois legislature, Governor Pritzker had 60 days to either sign it or let it become law. He chose to sign it on August 12th without any ceremony, without having Nadia, the young Assemblyman Ford and other senior state lawmakers by his side. Had he made it an event, he would have memorably conveyed the key motivating belief in a democracy—that one person can make a difference!

Citizen Nadia blazed the way, shaming the foot-dragging Illinois Trial Lawyers Association (ITLA) into jumping on the bandwagon in Springfield once the bill’s momentum grew.

On February 27, 2023, I wrote a letter to the President of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, Patrick A. Salvi II, wondering why the ITLA hadn’t pushed this initiative over many past years and urged them to “make the maximum effort to secure passage.” Trial Lawyer Associations do not usually answer letters, but this one got through, with copies to other interested parties. (See the letter here).

Our country, over time, has been helped immeasurably by outraged mothers (and fathers) turning their unabating mourning over the loss of their children into laser beam intensity behind health and safety laws to save other parents and children from similar tragedies. (Note e.g., Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

These civic heroes defy all odds to challenge and prevail. The odds don’t faze them; they have a higher calling to achieve.

Unfortunately, neither Governor Pritzker nor the mass media seized this dramatic moment for exemplary recognition. The law, however, now is on the books to further more humane and deterrent purposes, thanks “to that Lady from New England who shamed us all.”

#### REMEMBERING GEREMIAH LOFTON

##### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember Geremiah Lofton—an intelligent, hardworking, and charismatic former member of my staff—who passed away on January 22, 2024.

A proud native of Port Arthur, Texas, Geremiah was the son of Gina and Kenneth Lofton, Sr. He graduated from Memorial High School and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas, a Historically Black College.

Dedicated to public service, Geremiah served as an intern at the Department of State during college and moved to Washington, D.C., after graduation. He joined the staff of the Committee on Homeland Security in 2019, first as an intern and later as a staff assistant and a committee clerk, while pursuing his master’s in public administration at The George Washington University.

After earning his master’s degree, Geremiah continued his congressional service by assisting the Select Committee on the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol.

Geremiah was an exemplary and engaging member of my staff. His work was excellent and his warm, kind personality won him many friends on the Committee and across Capitol Hill.

In 2022, Geremiah became special assistant and briefing book coordinator for the Secretary of Homeland Security, where he served for nearly 2 years as a valued member of the Department of Homeland Security team.

Geremiah was also active in the community, as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, and Eastern Star Baptist Church in Port Arthur.

Geremiah left us too soon, and he will be greatly missed not only by his loved ones in Port Arthur but also his Capitol Hill family and friends. We are better for having known Geremiah and are grateful for his many contributions to the Committee, the community, and our country. My heartfelt sympathies and sincere condolences are with the Lofton family at this most difficult time.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE MCINTIRE-STENNIS ACT DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EQUALITY ACT

##### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the McIntire-Stennis Act District of Columbia Equality Act, which would correct an apparent oversight in the exclusion of the District of Columbia from eligibility for funding under the McIntire-Stennis Act.

The Act provides the states and certain territories with formula funding to support state designated institutions’ cooperative forestry research programs. The funding available under this Act assists the states and territories in carrying out forestry research programs at state forestry schools and colleges and developing a trained pool of forest scientists capable of conducting needed forestry research.

District of Columbia residents pay full federal taxes and therefore District of Columbia is treated as a state under federal programs, with limited exceptions. The Act defines “State” to include Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam, whose residents do not pay full federal taxes. D.C.’s exclusion from the Act makes it ineligible for federal funding that would support research at D.C.’s public university, the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). The College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences at UDC, the nation’s only urban land-grant university, offers programs that complement D.C.’s ongoing forestry efforts and serve individuals in D.C. and beyond. Rectifying D.C.’s exclusion from the Act would ensure equal treatment for D.C. and provide UDC a fair share of resources.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF MARTIN “BO” BURKE

##### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 20, 2024*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of one of Connecticut’s great leaders in our state’s legal profession and government who sadly passed