

# HONORING 2024 IERC VOLUNTEER FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR KERRY SHEPHERD

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kerry Shepherd, who is the chief of the Cloverdale Township Volunteer Fire Department, for winning the 2024 Indiana Emergency Response Conference Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year Award.

Kerry Shepherd was nominated for his selfless and unwavering commitment to the Cloverdale Township Volunteer Fire Department. He became a volunteer firefighter over 35 years ago to promote safety and preparedness for the Cloverdale community. Kerry has consistently fostered strong relationships with the fire department and the community around him through volunteering and public service.

Kerry won the Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year Award for his outstanding leadership capabilities, his perseverance during full-time, night-shift jobs, and his continuous dedication to volunteer. I am grateful for his exceptional service to our central Indiana communities, and I congratulate him on this outstanding accomplishment.

## HONORING 2024 IERC FIRE OFFICER OF THE YEAR DARRICK WIATT

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Darrick Wiatt of the Greencastle Fire Department for winning the 2024 Indiana Emergency Response Conference Fire Officer of the Year Award.

Darrick Wiatt has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication and was recently promoted to captain after 6 years as a lieutenant.

Darrick showed extraordinary commitment during an incident in February 2024 where he supported EMS staff in maintaining the well-being of a pediatric cardiac arrest patient.

Darrick is also active in his community through volunteering with other fire departments and taking part in peer mentoring and engaging with others who struggle with mental health.

Darrick won the Fire Officer of the Year Award for setting an exemplary standard of work, his outstanding professionalism, and his commitment to the continuous improvement of the fire department.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to congratulate Darrick on winning this award.

□ 1030

## IN MEMORY OF JOHNNY AND MATTHEW GAUDREAU

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

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau.

Last month, my home team, the Columbus Blue Jackets, played their season opener against the Florida Panthers. Each player wore a patch on

their jersey bearing number 13, the number previously worn by their teammate Johnny.

Johnny, or “Johnny Hockey” to his friends, played 10 full seasons for the NHL and was about to begin his third season with the Blue Jackets. His brother, Matthew, was an up-and-coming hockey coach following a professional career as a player in the AHL, ECHL, and Sweden.

In August, Johnny and his brother, Matthew, were killed when they were struck by a drunk driver while out on a bike ride. It was the day before their sister’s wedding.

Johnny and Matthew were beloved by their family and their community. Johnny is survived by his wife, Meredith, and their two children, Noa and Johnny Jr. Matthew is survived by his wife, Madeline. Both Meredith and Madeline are expecting children.

The Columbus community will never forget Johnny and Matthew. While their athletic talents were extraordinary, we can still learn from their example. We can emulate their strong work ethic, their love for their family, and their spirit.

To all who loved them, may their memory be a blessing.

## RECOGNIZING THE LONDON, OHIO, POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the police department of London, Ohio. Last week, officers Dylan Fout and Denise Dye brought a missing autistic 5-year-old home to his family.

Last Tuesday, the officers were on patrol when they spotted a young boy walking alone. However, when they turned their cruiser around to check on him, he had disappeared. The officers continued their pursuit on foot, where they found the boy floating in a creek. He was conscious and breathing, but the 40-degree water could have quickly become a life-threatening issue.

Thanks to these officers and their quick action, the boy was rescued and the London Fire Department medics were able to provide the emergency care that he needed.

We commend Officer Fout and Officer Dye for their service to our community and share our gratitude that this boy could come home safe to his family.

## RECOGNIZING NATIONAL CAREGIVER MONTH

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Caregiver Month.

Forty-eight million Americans are family caregivers. The care they provide allows their loved ones to age independently at home. From preparing meals, helping with bathing, feeding, and dressing, to assisting with financial and legal matters, the work done by family caregivers is essential.

In my home State of Ohio, family caregivers provide nearly 1.4 billion hours of care every year. That adds up to \$21 billion in unpaid labor per year, saving taxpayers billions.

We know that families want to support their loved ones through illness,

disability, and aging in place, but many of them can’t do so without our help.

We are proud to introduce the Credit for Caring Act, which would create a Federal tax credit for family caregivers who use their own money to take care of their loved ones.

This National Caregiver Month, I encourage my colleagues to stand with me and support family caregivers.

## CONGRATULATING NANCY HOWELL AGEE

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a remarkable individual from our great Commonwealth of Virginia, Nancy Howell Agee. Nancy was born at Roanoke Memorial Hospital, and it was here that she also began her journey into nursing at just 18 years old, a journey fueled by her passion for servant leadership.

Over the last 50 years, Nancy has dedicated herself to the health of our community. Starting as a nurse, she rose to the role of president and CEO of Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, making her the only female top executive in that position.

Under her leadership, the hospital has flourished, forging vital partnerships with Virginia Tech to establish a new medical school and Radford University’s premier nursing program. These initiatives are essential to keeping world-class talent in the Roanoke Valley.

As she retires, we must recognize her contributions, especially the future projects she leaves behind, including the new Crystal Spring Tower and the highly anticipated Taubman Cancer Center.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Nancy Howell Agee for her unwavering service and the lasting impact she has made on the Roanoke Valley. We wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

## CONGRATULATING WAYNE F. PRYOR

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary leader in Virginia agriculture, Wayne Pryor. This December, Wayne will retire as president of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation after 18 remarkable years of service as State president.

His dedication goes back even further, having previously served as vice president and as a member of the board since 1988. Wayne’s contributions to farming haven’t gone unnoticed. He was named Virginia Farm Bureau’s Eastern District Young Farmer of the Year early in his career and received the organization’s Warren Beach Award in 2005, a testament to his commitment to nurturing future leaders in the agriculture industry.

His accolades also include the Honorary American FFA Degree, highlighting his dedication to agricultural education and FFA.

Wayne's impact extends beyond Virginia. He serves on the board of the American Farm Bureau Federation and is involved with several key organizations within the agricultural community.

Additionally, "Virginia Business" magazine has recognized him multiple times in its annual "Virginia 500" list of the Commonwealth's most influential business, government, and political leaders.

Mr. Speaker, Wayne Pryor's leadership has made a lasting impact on the agricultural community and on Virginia itself. We thank him for his service and wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

CONGRATULATING THE ROANOKE CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD TEAM

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Roanoke Catholic School girls track and field team for winning the 2024 Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Division II State Championship.

After finishing second or third in the last three years, the Celtics were determined to improve. With hard work in technique, strength training, and practice, they made their championship dreams a reality.

This achievement reflects the dedication of both the athletes and their coaches, JASON SMITH, Sara Planta, P.J. Moyer, Erika Barger, and Brandie Smith. I especially recognize Jason for being named VISAA Girls Outdoor Division II Coach of the Year.

This year's exceptional roster—Aubrey Aaron, Sophia Bradley, Allison Brundrett, Eva Coniglione, Bailey Cundiff, Barrett Cundiff, Charlie Floyd, Annie Kovats, Justinne Llavore, Nicole Medina-Salinas, Mickie O'Herron, Ellie Patel, Karly Smith, Natalie Smith, and Sydney Whitt—had the honor of bringing home this historic title, marking the first girls track and field championship for Roanoke Catholic and the first private school to win a team title at the Cosmopolitan Invitational.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Roanoke Catholic School girls track and field team on this remarkable achievement. It is a great honor to have such talent in Virginia's Sixth Congressional District.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LEONARD KRAEMER

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the remarkable life of a true patriot from Virginia's Sixth District, Mr. Leonard Kraemer, who recently passed away at the remarkable age of 100.

Leonard exemplified what it means to serve our country. During World War II, he proudly served in the United States Navy as an electrician on the USS *Erben*, a *Fletcher*-class destroyer in the Pacific. His bravery earned him six battle stars, showcasing his dedication and sacrifice.

Beyond his military service, Leonard was a pillar of the community. He led as president of the Winchester Host Lions Club for three terms, supported Little League Baseball programs, and

even had the honor of playing baseball with Joe DiMaggio at Yankee Stadium. His generous spirit and love for his community continue to inspire us all.

As we remember Mr. Leonard Kraemer, let us celebrate his extraordinary life, his wartime sacrifices, and his lifelong commitment to Virginia and our Nation.

We thank Leonard for his service and dedication. May he rest in peace.

#### HISPANIC VOTE

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

Mr. LOPEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Hispanic community. On November 5, our Nation turned a page of history with an election of a Republican President and a Republican-controlled Congress.

This is a defining moment in our Nation's history, as a sleeping giant has arisen that will forever determine the future of our Nation: the Hispanic vote.

For the first time in American history, nearly 50 percent of my Hispanic brothers and sisters voted their values of faith, family, and freedom and voted Republican.

To my Republican brothers and sisters, I urge you to seize this moment. I firmly believe that the Hispanic vote not only saved America but also saved the American Dream that we all aspire to achieve by electing President Trump.

Why do I believe that? I am glad you asked.

First, I firmly believe that our misguided brothers and sisters of the Democratic Party would still be in positions of leadership if it wasn't for the Hispanic voters who decided to fire them and hire new leadership.

Let me remind you that we are all Americans, and as Americans, we want leaders who care about us, who understand us and, most importantly, who listen to what we have to say and treat us with respect.

We believe in work and opportunity. We believe that dignity and respect come from hard work and providing for our families. We believe we play a role in the tapestry and future of America, and we are one of the many communities that are the lifeblood of this Nation. I am a living example of this belief.

Second, the American Dream, something that for generations so many of us came to this country to pursue, is being destroyed as job opportunities are dwindling and the cost of living is becoming unbearable. Soaring inflation has made it increasingly difficult for families to make ends meet and for our children to achieve the American Dream.

As an American from Mexican descent, I am proud to stand here today and witness my community break free from the Democratic Party. It is a shift that not only reflects the frustration many of us feel but also the rec-

ognition that the values that truly resonate with the Hispanic community, values such as faith, family, and freedom, are in line with the core principles of the Republican Party.

These are not just abstract concepts. They are the foundation of our lives and the very essence of what made this country great.

Faith has always been an essential part of the Hispanic community. It is our guiding light in times of trial and our source of hope for the future. We want our newly elected Republican President to stand firm in his commitment to protecting religious freedom. Whether it is defending the rights of churches to operate freely or standing up for the religious freedoms of all Americans, the Republican Party is a party that understands the importance of faith in daily lives.

Family is another cornerstone of our community. Hispanic families are close-knit, resilient, and supportive. We prioritize our families above all else, and we want to ensure that our next generation has the opportunity to thrive in a country that offers them safety, prosperity, and the ability to achieve their dreams.

Under the leadership of the Republican Party, we will again see policies that continue to promote family values, policies such as tax cuts helping working families and support for school choice. These are the kinds of policies that truly uplift families, and they are policies that have resonated with Hispanic Americans.

Finally, freedom. We live in a country where each person has the opportunity to pursue their dreams, to work hard, and to succeed on their own terms. It is what drew so many of us to America in the first place. The Republican Party will continue to stand strong in defending individual freedoms, whether it is economic freedom, the right to bear arms, or the freedom to speak our minds.

November 5 was a pivotal day in American politics. It wasn't just a victory for one party or one candidate. It was a victory for the values that have always been at the heart of the Hispanic community.

Latinos are rejecting the extreme agenda of the Democratic Party, and they are finding a new home in the Republican Party, one that will put their interests first, defend their values, and ensure their voices are heard.

This is only the beginning. The Hispanic community in America is waking up to the reality that the Republican Party offers a better path forward.

Mr. Speaker, 2025 marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Hispanic community, a chapter that will be defined by prosperity, safety, and opportunity, all of which will return under the leadership of President Trump.

As we look to the future, let us be clear: The Hispanic community is no longer a guaranteed vote for the Democratic Party.

We are standing up, we are speaking out, and we will never stop. Together,