

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE OF CESAR J. SOLDA

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a dedicated patriot, Cesar J. Solda, of Chester Springs, Pennsylvania.

Born in France during a time of war, Mr. Solda's life began with great challenge. He was later adopted by an American soldier, a moment that gave him the gift of a second chance and a brighter future. Leaving his family behind, he came to New York and embraced a new life filled with opportunity.

Mr. Solda answered the call to serve our Nation in the United States Army, representing America with honor during the Korean War. Upon his return in 1962, he began a new chapter in Long Island, New York, where he built a family, embraced fatherhood, and shared a life of love with his beloved wife. A proud family man, he often returned to France to reconnect with loved ones, bringing with him his wife, adopted father, and three sons, ensuring that family bonds remained strong across oceans.

In 1985, Mr. Solda and his family moved to Chester Springs, where he grew deep roots in the community. There, he built lasting friendships, expanded his family, and lived life to its fullest. A farmer at heart, he held a profound respect for the land, the soil, and all living things. His life was a testament to resilience, gratitude, and love. As his family and friends now reflect, Mr. Solda climbed every rung of life's ladder—one that reached into the heavens.

In recognition of his service, devotion to family, and the example he set for others, I have requested that the flag of the United States be flown over our Nation's Capitol in his honor. His life was filled with courage, family, and faith, and his memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

CONGRATULATING LANCASTER CITY POLICE CHIEF RICHARD MENDEZ ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize and congratulate Chief Richard Mendez on his retirement as Chief of the Lancaster City Bureau of Police Chief, and I thank him for his 25 years of dedicated service to the Lancaster community.

A native of the City of Lancaster and a graduate of McCaskey High School, Chief Mendez joined his hometown police department in 2000. Over the course of his distinguished career, he served as a patrol officer,

K-9 officer, member of the Selective Enforcement Unit, member of the Lancaster County Special Emergency Response Team, and platoon leader. Demonstrating an unparalleled work ethic, he rose through the ranks, and in 2021, was appointed Captain of Patrol, the largest division of the Lancaster City Bureau of Police.

In July 2022, Chief Mendez was sworn in as Chief of Police, becoming the first Hispanic police chief in the bureau's history. During his tenure, the bureau achieved accreditation from the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association and implemented significant improvements to its recruitment process. Chief Mendez helped to advance community-focused initiatives such as the Police Social Worker Program, the Office of Community Engagement, and expanded bike patrols, all of which strengthened trust and collaboration between law enforcement and residents.

Chief Mendez has devoted the past 25 years to keeping Lancaster safe. I am extremely grateful for the positive impact he has had on the community. I wish him the best in his well-earned retirement.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WRECK OF THE S.S. EDMUND FITZGERALD

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of the wreck of the S.S. *Edmund Fitzgerald* on November 10, 1975, and the 29 crewmates who tragically lost their lives off the shores of Lake Superior.

Nicknamed "The Pride of the American Side," the *Edmund Fitzgerald* was the largest ship on North America's Great Lakes when it was launched on June 7, 1958. For 17 years, the ship carried taconite from mines in Minnesota to Michigan, Ohio, and various other Great Lakes ports. The ship earned a reputation as a workhorse—becoming the first ship to carry one million tons of ore through the Soo Locks in a year—and set the record for single-trip tonnage, carrying more than twenty-seven thousand tons of ore in one voyage. Despite all these accolades, the ship is most remembered for what happened on that fateful November night.

The *Edmund Fitzgerald* embarked on its final mission on the afternoon of November 9, 1975, carrying a fall cargo from Superior, Wisconsin, towards Zug Island in Detroit alongside the S.S. *Arthur M. Anderson*. On November 10th, the ships were caught in a hurricane-like storm, facing 25-to-30-foot waves and wind speeds of nearly 100 miles per hour. With the *Edmund Fitzgerald* struggling to navigate the storm, the captains of both ships agreed to seek refuge in Whitefish Bay, off the coast of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Shortly after 7:10 p.m., just 17 miles from Whitefish

Bay, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* sank to the bottom of Lake Superior. The ship remains there today, more than 500 feet below the surface of the Great Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, as we commemorate this somber anniversary, let us remember the courage, dedication, and sacrifice of the *Edmund Fitzgerald's* crew. Their story endures as a lasting reminder of the strength and spirit of those who live and work on the Great Lakes, and of the deep connection between our people and these powerful waters.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MEENA VYAS, MD

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the remarkable career of Dr. Meena Vyas, whose dedication to mental health care and public service has profoundly impacted the people of Denton County, Texas, and beyond. This year marks 30 years of her extraordinary service with Denton County MHMR, where she has exemplified excellence, compassion, and leadership. Beginning her tenure as a psychiatrist in 1996, Dr. Vyas went on to serve as Medical Director from 2011 to 2023 and now as Chief Medical Officer, providing visionary leadership and compassionate care to countless individuals and families.

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Vyas has devoted herself to improving mental health care and strengthening community-based services. She has served on numerous professional committees, including the American Psychiatric Association, the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians (TSPP) Public Mental Health Committee, and the Medical Services Consortium of the Texas Council of Community Centers, where she held positions as both Chair and Vice Chair. Her leadership in these roles has helped shape statewide policy and advance the quality and accessibility of behavioral health services for Texans.

Dr. Vyas's contributions have been recognized through several prestigious honors, including the Dr. Spencer Bayles Outstanding TSPP Member Award, the Fellow distinction from the American Psychiatric Association, and the Women of the Year Award for Excellence in Health from the Multi-Ethnic Education and Economic Development Center. Beyond her professional achievements, she has been an active advocate for community well-being, contributing her expertise to initiatives such as the Zero Suicide Task Force, Death Review, and Safety and Quality Management Committees, as well as grant reviews for SAMHSA, CCBHC, and AOT programs.

Dr. Meena Vyas's commitment to her patients, her profession, and her community represents the very best of public service. For three decades, she has embodied compassion, leadership, and innovation in mental

● 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.

health care, leaving an enduring legacy at Denton County MHMR and across the state of Texas. It is an honor to celebrate her 30 years of dedicated service and her profound contributions to the advancement of mental health.

THANKING DEREK HARLEY FOR
HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I kindly ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Derek N. Harley for his 25 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Derek began his career on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Assistant with Representative Walley Herger of California, later serving as his Legislative Director and then his Chief of Staff. Following Congressman Herger's retirement, Derek served as Chief of Staff to Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio. As Chief, Derek was known for prioritizing first-in-class constituent services, a focus he has maintained throughout his career in the House.

After a short time off the Hill, Derek returned to the House as the Republican Staff Director of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. In this position, he saw an opportunity to strengthen Congress's Article I obligations and create positive and lasting institutional change. The Select Committee had what Derek called "squeaky wheel authority" to call attention to longstanding problems and challenges for the House, and he used that authority to relentlessly pursue solutions. His insistence on working with House partners and colleagues across-the-aisle to forge change and strengthen this institution for the better will benefit generations of Members and staff to come. We can all learn a lot from his example.

At the start of the 118th Congress, the Committee on House Administration turned to Derek to Lead the newly constituted Subcommittee on Modernization. Quite frankly, there was no one better suited for this position than Derek. His institutional expertise, his proven leadership skills, and his unwavering dedication to the House and the people it serves made him the obvious—and only—choice to serve as the Subcommittee's inaugural Staff Director. Under the leadership of Subcommittee Chairwoman STEPHANIE BICE of Oklahoma, Derek worked to create new, and much-needed, collaborative workspaces for staff across the House Office Buildings, improve ADA access to the House and the Capitol, streamline the transfer of constituent casework to incoming members of Congress, provide House committees with access to industry-standard e-Discovery software, institute positive change at the Congressional Research Service, and provide more opportunities for Members to engage with their constituents. These are just a few examples of the many contributions Derek has made to this institution.

At the start of the 119th Congress, Derek joined Speaker MIKE JOHNSON's team as Director of House Operations, where he's worked hand-in-glove with my team on House Administration to meet critical campus needs, formalize longstanding policies for House of

ices, and think strategically about the House's future physical space needs. Derek has always remained open to ideas and solutions and is committed to finding the best path forward for the institution in service to its Members, staff, and the taxpayer.

I am fortunate to have worked with Derek and know he will be missed by many House Members and staff. Derek has been a consummate steward of the institution and a willing partner to everyone who wants the House to work well for the American people. He has already had a lasting and positive impact on the institution and, through his example, has inspired others to continue this work.

On behalf of my colleagues and staff on the Committee on House Administration, I wish Derek Harley all the best as he begins his new role as the Chief Executive Officer of the Congressional Institute. I thank him for his service to the United States House of Representatives.

HONORING REVEREND BRITISH
CONLEY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend British Conley.

Reverend British Conley, a native of Lambert, Mississippi, was born to the late Robert Gross, Sr. and the late Gertrude Conley. He is a distinguished United States Navy veteran who served honorably on active duty from 1998 to 2002, followed by four additional years in the United States Navy Reserve from 2002 to 2006. His military service instilled in him the values of duty, integrity, and perseverance—principles that have guided his lifelong commitment to service. Following his time in the Navy, he continued to serve his state and community as a Correctional Officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary, where he worked diligently for four years to uphold safety and order.

A 1997 graduate of Madison Shannon Palmer High School—formerly Quitman County High School—Reverend Conley demonstrated resilience and determination early in life. His perseverance was recognized when he received the Against All Odds Award and a Scholarship from Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from Mississippi Valley State University in Itta Bena, Mississippi. His passion for education and leadership led him to the University of Mississippi, where he achieved multiple advanced degrees: a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Special Education, an Educational Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and a Specialist Degree in K–12 Educational Leadership.

Beyond his academic and professional accomplishments, Reverend Conley is a servant-leader in both education and faith. He continues to impact lives as an educational leader and as Pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Belen, Mississippi. His ministry and career embody his belief in building stronger communities through faith, education, and service.

He has been blessed in life and love, married to his high school sweetheart, Mrs. Terry Lashell Geter-Conley, for 17 years. Mrs. Conley is an accomplished entrepreneur and owner of Sweetie's Home Event and Décor. Together, they find joy and renewal through their shared passion for camping, traveling, and nurturing their garden.

From Lambert, Mississippi, to the U.S. Navy, to the classroom, and to the pulpit, Reverend Conley's life reflects resilience, faith, and the transformative power of service, leadership, and love.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend British Conley for his dedication and service to the State of Mississippi and the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING MR. KONRAD
KROZNER'S 16 YEARS WITH THE
PENNSYLVANIA BIOTECHNOLOGY
CENTER AND BARUCH S.
BLUMBERG INSTITUTE

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from my district, Mr. Konrad Kroszner, the Director of Operations and Director of Systems and Engineering at the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center and Baruch S. Blumberg Institute. Today, I proudly commend him on his well-earned retirement, following 16 years of dedicated work to furthering education and research in our community.

As the Director of Operations and Director of Systems and Engineering, Mr. Kroszner has been a driving force behind maintenance and improvement for the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center and Baruch S. Blumberg Institute. In his pursuit of ensuring the safe operations of the campus, he led two expansions during his tenure that improved infrastructure for the biotech research teams, bringing old lab spaces up to code to ensure that the latest safety and technical requirements were being met.

Through Mr. Kroszner's tireless efforts, the researchers of my district are better able to apply their technical knowledge through their research in a safe and secure manner. He took personal pride in his work, spearheading the smallest aspects of both the construction and system-engineering aspects down to the minute details.

Konrad's work has not gone unnoticed. His expansion efforts and day-to-day care for the facilities have led the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center to become a world-class biotechnology center, aiding institutions such as the Hepatitis B Foundation and Baruch S. Blumberg Institute in their mission of curing disease such as Hepatitis B and Liver Cancer.

Mr. Kroszner began his career at the United States Naval Academy, where he graduated in 1977 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering. He spent the next 10 years of his career as an engineer with the Naval Air Warfare Center in Trenton where he supported naval aviation fuel related issues, managed military specifications for fuel contamination detection devices and components, and provided emergency support for U.S. Navy fleet operations.