

throughout the fall, with only one game being decided by less than ten points, capping off an undefeated season.

What makes this accomplishment even more remarkable is the extraordinary effort from the surrounding communities to help the Maroons make the trip down to Ford Field in Detroit for the game. Those of us from the Upper Peninsula know that a sudden trip downstate is no easy feat. The Maroons needed funds for a three-day trip, including money for charter buses, two nights of lodging, and three meals per day. The Menominee community rallied around the team and raised nearly \$30,000 in two days. Such generosity and determination speak to the spirit, resilience, and pride that define the people of the Upper Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in recognizing the Menominee High School football team for winning the Division 7 Michigan State Championship. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the players, coaches, and all those who supported them.

HONORING U.S. NAVY PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS RONCHESTER MANANGA SANTIAGO

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage, sacrifice, and service of Mess Management Specialist Third Class (MS3) Ronchester M. Santiago, who gave this life in the line of duty during the terrorist attack on the USS *Cole* on October 12, 2000.

While the USS *Cole* was refueling at the Port of Aden, Yemen, a terrorist detonated an explosive alongside the ship's port side. This attack claimed the lives of 17 American sailors, and injured dozens more. Among those lost was MS3 Ronchester Santiago, a young man whose unwavering dedication to his country and his shipmates exemplified the highest ideals of the United States Navy.

Born and raised in Kingsville, Texas, Petty Officer Santiago embraced both service and leadership from a young age. A graduate of H.M. King High School and a member of its ROTC program, he answered the call to serve soon after earning his high school diploma. His four years in the Navy were marked by diligence and integrity.

Petty Officer Santiago spent three years stationed at the Charlestown Navy Yard as a crew member of the USS *Constitution*, the oldest commissioned warship in the world. His dedicated work as a cook and his cheerful personality made him an uplifting presence aboard "Old Ironsides," and one of the ship's galleys was later named in his honor, a lasting tribute to the legacy he left behind.

Upon joining the crew of the USS *Cole*, Petty Officer Santiago continued to bring professionalism, optimism, and resolve to each mission. He took great pride in serving his country and looked forward to studying electrical engineering at The University of Texas.

His service is a testament to the countless young Americans who step forward each day to defend our freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Petty Officer Santiago, his family,

friends, and all who carry his memory forward. May his legacy of courage and dedication continue to inspire future generations of Americans.

RECOGNIZING AVON HIGH SCHOOL ON WINNING THE DIVISION II STATE BOYS SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to pay a very special tribute to an outstanding high school soccer team in Ohio's 5th Congressional District. The young men of the Avon High School boys soccer team have represented their school ably on their way to achieving the Division II State Boys Soccer Title. In their effort to surpass all other teams in the Division II State Soccer Playoffs, the Avon Eagles overcame the challenges posed by intense competition.

In pursuing the State Championship, the Avon Eagles defeated the Kings Mills Knights to win their first state soccer championship. The members of this very special team have shown that their sport requires an individual effort for a team result. Their hard work and dedication, both on and off the field, in achieving this accomplishment, is truly outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the Avon High School boys soccer team. On behalf of the people of the 5th District of Ohio, I am proud to recognize this great achievement.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF GARY SPARKS AS FIRE CHIEF FOR THE CITY OF OXFORD, ALABAMA

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fire Chief Gary Sparks on his retirement, after more than 40 years of service as a firefighter for the City of Oxford, Alabama.

Chief Sparks began his work with the City of Oxford when he was just 15 years old, washing trucks and cleaning the station. On May 12, 1983, he became an official member of the Oxford Volunteer Fire Department.

He later became a full-time member of the Anniston Fire Department on February 13, 1987, rising through the ranks to eventually become Assistant Fire Chief in 2003.

After 20 years of service with the Anniston Fire Department, he retired on February 13, 2007. Chief Sparks became full-time Fire Chief for the City of Oxford on March 3, 2007.

Chief Sparks is involved in several civic organizations in his community. He is currently serving on the Alabama Joint Fire Council. He has served Alabama's fire service for eight years with dedication and insight as a member of the Personnel Standards & Education Commission with the Alabama Fire College. He is a Past President of the Alabama Fire Chiefs

Association and was voted the 2015 Alabama Fire Chief of the Year.

In addition to being a dedicated firefighter, Chief Sparks is also a committed husband to his wife, Monica, a wonderful father to his son Robert (Meaghen) and grandfather to McKenna and Conor.

On February 2, 2026, Chief Sparks will retire.

HONORING ROBERT "ROB" ALTMAN WITH A CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major Robert "Rob" Altman of Frisco, Texas, and to honor him with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Major Altman honorably served for over 25 years in the United States Army, demonstrating exceptional leadership and dedication to our Nation.

At just nineteen years old, Rob began his military career in 1993, serving both as an enlisted soldier and a commissioned officer. Throughout his distinguished service, he held numerous leadership roles, including team leader, platoon leader, company commander, operations cell leader, diplomatic and intelligence advisor, battalion executive officer, and chief of staff. His assignments took him to Germany and included multiple deployments, during which he spent more than 30 months in combat zones. For his exemplary service, he earned the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals.

Rob has also excelled academically. He completed the Leaders Program in Advanced Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany in 2011, earned a Master of Arts in International Affairs from the George H. W. Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University in 2013, and was selected for the Art of War Scholars Program at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in 2014. He is now completing Ph.D. coursework in history at the University of North Texas, focusing on U.S. Army mobilization and interwar planning.

In his community, Rob serves as Chair of the Frisco Veterans Advisory Committee and on the National Security Advisory Council for America's Future Series. He is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and a life member of both the VFW and American Legion. Dedicated to developing young leaders, he served six years as Assistant Scoutmaster and Scoutmaster for Scouting America Troop 45. In December 2024, he continued his public service when he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Denton Central Appraisal District.

I am deeply honored to recognize Major Robert Altman for his extraordinary courage, patriotism, and lifelong commitment to service. He represents the very best of Texas' 4th Congressional District and of our great Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MORGAN MCGARVEY

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I was regrettably unable to vote on Roll Call No. 321. Had I been able to vote, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 321.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to indicate my reasons that I will not be voting to fund Israel's military, most of which are contained in the letter that was delivered to Speaker MIKE JOHNSON's office on December 10, 2025.

I ask that funding for our military not be linked to funding Israel's military. I support our military. I do not approve of attaching my support for our military to Israel's military. We, who support our military should be allowed to do so without having to fund Israel's military. Those who support Israel's military should be able to do so in a standalone bill. I cannot in good conscience vote to authorize sending our tax dollars to a military whose prime minister has been accused by the International Criminal Court of "the war crimes of starvation as a method of warfare and of intentionally directing an attack against the civilian population; and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts;" to a military that has killed more than 70,000 thousand Palestinian men, women, and especially children in Gaza.

If my request to detach funding our military from funding Israel's military in legislation is not granted, I will oppose the legislation. While I believe Israel should have a military, I will not vote to support funding Israel's military. I make this request on behalf of myself and no one else. On some issues it is better to stand alone than not stand at all.

RECOGNIZING AVON HIGH SCHOOL ON WINNING THE DIVISION II STATE GIRLS VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to pay a very special tribute to an outstanding high school volleyball team in Ohio's 5th Congressional District. The young women of the Avon High School girls volleyball team have represented their school ably on their way to achieving the Division II State Girls Volleyball Title. In their effort to surpass all other teams in the Division II State Volleyball Playoffs, the Avon Eagles overcame the challenges posed by intense competition.

In pursuing the State Championship, the Avon Eagles defeated the Anthony Wayne Generals to win the state volleyball championship. The members of this very special team have shown that their sport requires an individual effort for a team result. Their hard work and dedication, both on and off the field, in achieving this accomplishment, is truly outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the Avon High School girls volleyball team. On behalf of the people of the 5th District of Ohio, I am proud to recognize this great achievement.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO A DEDICATED CONGRESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER, MS. DEBORAH PERRY

HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a congressional staffer who has played an indispensable role in Maryland's 7th Congressional District. She began her well-deserved retirement this year after over 29 years of service to the United States Congress and the people of Baltimore.

Ms. Deborah Perry is a Baltimore native, born on December 25, Christmas Day, 1950—a birthday that presaged the gift that Ms. Perry would become to her community. She grew up with a young U.S. Representative Elijah Cummings, beginning a friendship and professional relationship that would last decades.

Ms. Perry graduated from Baltimore's Eastern High School with a degree in business education and from the Community College of Baltimore with a paralegal degree. She began her career as a civil servant, spending nearly a decade working for Baltimore City's Police Department and Department of Social Services.

After briefly working in the Congressional offices of Frederick Richmond (D-NY-14) and Julian Dixon (D-CA-28), Ms. Perry started a business, Case Management Plus, providing outsourcing services to attorneys to assist with personal injury and workers' compensation cases.

In the early 1990's, Ms. Perry began working for Delegate Elijah Cummings, then a member of Maryland's House of Delegates. She worked in his law office until 1996, when Elijah won the special election to the congressional seat that I had vacated. Elijah brought Ms. Perry to Congress as his District Office Manager, responsible for training new employees and coordinating major projects in the district.

Over the next 23 years, Ms. Perry performed many roles helping Elijah serve the people of Baltimore. After three years as office manager, Ms. Perry began assisting constituents resolve their issues with various government agencies. She also represented Elijah at important meetings, like those for the \$1.6 billion East Baltimore Development Project. After five years in that role, Ms. Perry became Elijah's Executive Assistant, taking on the demanding task of managing his daily schedule.

After three years as Executive Assistant, Ms. Perry left public service in 2007, ready to enjoy retirement. In a testament to her char-

acter, after the 2008 financial crash, Ms. Perry came out of retirement to help handle the influx of housing and foreclosure cases. She worked tirelessly for struggling Baltimoreans, developing and organizing 12 Foreclosure Prevention Workshops. These workshops were well attended, each with more than 1,000 participants. The workshops were so successful, she was asked to train other Congressional offices on how to host similar workshops in their own districts.

When she returned to public service in 2009, Ms. Perry intended to help for a few months and then return to retirement. For the next 10 years, she remained an invaluable staffer, serving as Elijah's Special Assistant until his untimely death in 2019. When I was elected to replace my friend Elijah in my old congressional seat in 2020, I knew that Ms. Perry, with decades of experience, would be an asset to my office.

I was fortunate that she agreed to stay in the office as a Constituent Services Representative, helping Baltimoreans resolve issues with their housing, social services, and utilities. She has served with distinction these last 5 years, often speaking of the blessing it is to be able to help so many people.

Ms. Perry's motto is "Always exceeding the expectations of the people she serves in everything she does." She has always had a passion for helping others, adhering to the Japanese philosophy of Kaizen, which encourages change for the better.

Ms. Deborah Perry has left an indelible mark on Maryland's 7th Congressional District. After nearly 30 years of selflessly spreading blessings to the people of Baltimore, she is getting the retirement that she deserves. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give Ms. Perry the recognition that she deserves—recognition of her great accomplishments, extensive service, and of the profound impact that she has had on our office and the people that we represent. I thank Ms. Perry for everything.

HONORING MR. IAN MATTHEWS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend an outstanding educator from Mississippi's Delta region, Mr. Ian Matthews, a dedicated science teacher at West Bolivar High School in Rosedale. Mr. Matthews has recently been selected to serve on the Mississippi Department of Education's Science Standard Review Committee, a prestigious and highly selective body tasked with reviewing and shaping the future of science education across our state.

Mr. Matthews represents Mississippi's 2nd Congressional District on this committee and was chosen from nearly 100 applicants statewide, with only about two dozen ultimately selected. His appointment reflects his exceptional knowledge of science curriculum standards, his effectiveness in the classroom, and his deep commitment to student achievement—particularly in high-stakes, state-tested subject areas such as Biology.

A proud native of Benoit, Mississippi, Mr. Matthews is a 2016 graduate of Ray Brooks High School, which once served the same