

screenings and enhanced physical exams. He also championed community-first public safety strategies, workforce inclusion, and operational models that prioritize equity, readiness, and compassionate service for all Saint Paul residents.

Although retiring from his role as Fire Chief, Butch Inks is not retiring from public service. He will continue to shape the future of Minnesota's fire service as the next executive director of the Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board. In this role, he will help ensure that future firefighters meet the highest standards of training and professionalism by overseeing the examinations and certification processes that prepare them for licensure and service.

It has been my honor and a privilege to work with Chief Inks. His commitment to serve not only the citizens of Saint Paul, Minnesota but our entire Nation has left an indelible mark. As he retires from service to the City of Saint Paul, I wish him well, along with his wife Erica and their four children.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in this well-deserved tribute to St. Paul Fire Chief Butch Inks on his retirement after more than three decades of steadfast dedication to public safety.

SUPPORTING THE PROSPER IN THE PACIFIC ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my Promoting Regional Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity and Economic Resilience in the Pacific Act, or PROSPER in the Pacific Act, to advance the U.S.-Pacific Islands relationship to include an economic partnership built on shared values and principles.

The Pacific Islands, spread across the vast Pacific Ocean, have a collective maritime area that exceeds the land area of Russia and China combined. These jurisdictions are key partners in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific and meeting vital security and economic challenges. It is imperative that we develop, maintain, and grow these relationships.

Recognizing this, successive administrations have committed to deepening U.S. engagement in the region, including through trade and investment. Most recently, the 2025 National Security Strategy asserts that "the Indo-Pacific is already and will continue to be among the next century's key economic and geopolitical battlegrounds," reaffirms our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and prioritizes winning the economic competition over the long term in the region. Additionally, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission's 2025 Annual Report to Congress recommended that we strengthen economic assistance to Pacific Island countries to support U.S. national security interests and the priorities of partner countries.

However, our economic toolkit for achieving our goals in the Pacific Islands needs to be strengthened. Many Pacific Island countries enjoyed preferential treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) when it was authorized, but the program lapsed in 2020. Some of the Pacific Islands' top exports to the U.S., including tuna, cane sugar, ginger

and taro, would be eligible for duty-free treatment under GSP but for this lapse.

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the leading multinational political organization for the Pacific Islands region, has prioritized the region's need to build trade capacity and infrastructure and has specifically advocated for preferential trade agreements given its lack of competitiveness due to its small national markets, isolation from the global market, and high cost of operating and land and labor constraints. The PIF has encouraged the U.S. to extend duty-free treatment under the GSP beyond preferences for Least Developed Beneficiary Developing Countries.

Implementing such a program would come at a low cost to the U.S. while delivering a high strategic return, especially given the People's Republic of China's (PRC) increased focus on expanding its influence in the region. My bill, PROSPER in the Pacific, would provide a visible alternative to the PRC by emphasizing economic partnership over debt-trap diplomacy, all while encouraging private-sector-led development, market-based economies, and goodwill towards the U.S.

The PROSPER in the Pacific Act would authorize the President to designate certain articles imported from eligible Pacific Island countries for duty-free treatment, extending to them the same preferential access that is afforded to least developed beneficiary developing countries under GSP. By doing so, my legislation aims to stimulate export opportunities for Pacific Island economies while encouraging U.S. businesses to source more goods from the region. In addition to expanding market access, the bill would direct the President to develop a comprehensive plan for negotiating free trade agreements with Pacific Island countries that express interest, laying the groundwork for deeper, long-term economic integration. Finally, my bill would create a dedicated trade facilitation and capacity-building program for the Pacific Islands to help partner governments strengthen customs procedures, meet U.S. product standards, and improve overall export readiness, ensuring they can fully realize the benefits of enhanced trade ties.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to sustain and expand U.S. economic and security engagement in this critical region.

RECOGNIZING THE NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL CHEER TEAM ON WIN- NING THE DIVISION III OHSCCA BEST IN THE STATE TITLE

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 cheer team in Ohio's 5th Congressional District. The young student athletes of the Norwalk High School cheer team have represented their school ably on their way to achieving the Ohio High School Cheerleading and Dance Coaches Association Division III Best in the State title.

In their effort to surpass all other teams in the division, Norwalk overcame the challenges

posed by intense competition. 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 floor, in achieving this accomplishment, is truly outstanding.

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

RECOGNIZING DOROTHY GIAMBOI FOR NEARLY FIFTEEN YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Dorothy Giamboi on her conclusion of service to the Borough of Metuchen Council. After fourteen years, Dorothy stands as the longest-serving Council Member in Metuchen's history. Please join me in celebrating my long-time friend, Dorothy Giamboi, for her outstanding contributions to the community.

Since 2011, Councilwoman Dorothy Giamboi has served on the Metuchen Borough Council, acting as the liaison to the Metuchen Chamber of Commerce, Development Commission, Municipal Alliance/Youth Services Board, and currently to the Shade Tree Commission, Environmental Commission, and Senior Citizen Commission. In addition to her leadership within the council, Dorothy has served on the Middlesex County Water Resources Association and as Chairwoman of the Peter Barnes Wildlife Preserve Commission.

Councilwoman Giamboi leaves a legacy of environmental advocacy and stewardship, including her contribution to the creation and adoption of a master plan of local ecology preservation for the largest undeveloped ecosystem in northern Middlesex County. This oversight will be instrumental in the continued restoration of the Woodbrook Superfund Site, and associated conservation efforts throughout the area. Dorothy played a pivotal role in securing grants from Sustainable Jersey and the National Park Service, including twenty-five thousand dollars to provide composters to residents. In 2015, Dorothy was named a Sustainability Hero by Sustainable Jersey. I am confident that the 6th Congressional District of New Jersey will thank her for her efforts to keep Middlesex County's greater environment safe, healthy, and thriving for years to come. As she embarks on this new phase, Dorothy is joined by her beloved two sons, husband, Alex Giamboi, two shih tzus, and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me on congratulating Dorothy Giamboi on her fourteen years of service with the Borough of Metuchen. It is my privilege to recognize her remarkable contributions to our community and offer my best wishes for a restful and joyful new stage in life.

CELEBRATING BATTALION CHIEF
JAMES JONES ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. RUDY YAKYM III

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Battalion Chief James Jones of the South Bend Fire Department, as he retires after 35 years of outstanding service to the City of South Bend and to the state of Indiana.

Chief Jones began his career in April of 1991 and has spent more than three decades protecting the safety and well-being of our community. He has served with distinction in every role he has held, most recently as the Battalion Chief for C-shift, where his leadership, professionalism, and steady presence have earned the respect of both his colleagues and the citizens he served.

In 2016, Chief Jones faced a personal battle with prostate cancer. Throughout his treatment, he continued to report for duty and remained committed to the people who depended on him. This strength of character reflects the very best of public service and stands as an inspiration to all who know his story.

Today, we offer our deepest gratitude.

I thank Chief Jones for his devotion to duty, his courage in the face of adversity, and his unwavering commitment to our community. His service has made a lasting impact on our community, and he leaves a legacy of integrity, compassion, and dedication.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Battalion Chief James Jones and congratulating him on his well-deserved retirement.

HONORING MS. DENYCE GRAVES

HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Denyce Graves—world-renowned mezzo-soprano, visionary stage director, and tireless advocate for arts education—who has dedicated her career not only to performance, but to inspiring, uplifting, and empowering the next generation of artists.

Ms. Graves was raised in Washington, D.C., by her mother, Dorothy Graves-Kenner, a fierce believer in education. Dorothy assigned her children weekly enrichment projects and nurtured Denyce's early affinity for music—first in the church choir, and later in elementary school.

In elementary school, Ms. Graves experienced the transformative power of mentorship through her music teacher, Judith Grove, who recognized her talent and followed her all the way through high school. She attended the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, where she was introduced to classical music—and promptly fell in love with the art form.

After high school, Ms. Graves continued her studies at Oberlin College and Conservatory and at the New England Conservatory of Music, where she honed her vocal technique and deepened her understanding of performance.

Ms. Graves' early career was marked by both triumph and setbacks. She impressed at the Metropolitan Opera's regional auditions, but fell short in the finals, leading her to take a break from singing and work as a hospital secretary. Just as she began to consider leaving music behind, the Houston Grand Opera reached out and invited her to their young artists program, rekindling her career and setting her on a course for the world stage.

Shortly thereafter, Ms. Graves took the world by storm, captivating audiences at the Bastille Opera House in Paris, the Vienna State Opera, and other major houses across Europe and the Americas. Her growing international acclaim culminated in 1995, with her landmark Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of Carmen. She brought to the role a gravitas and a fiery intensity that critics lauded as a defining interpretation. She brought that same commanding presence to the stage as Dalila in Samson et Dalila, establishing herself as one of the great operatic superstars of the modern era.

Throughout her career, Ms. Graves has been honored repeatedly for her artistic achievements and philanthropic leadership. She has won an Emmy and a Grammy, as well as the Washington Performing Arts' Ambassador of the Arts Award. She was named a U.S. Cultural Ambassador, sang at the National Prayer Service following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and performed at President George W. Bush's second inauguration. Most recently, she received the Service to America Leadership Award from the National Association of Broadcasters Leadership Foundation, in recognition of her unwavering dedication to public service through the arts.

These honors reflect not only Ms. Graves' extraordinary talent, but also her commitment to using her talent in service of others. She is a teacher and mentor at the Juilliard School, the Peabody Conservatory, and the University of Toronto. She founded the Denyce Graves Foundation in 2021, with a two-pronged mission: to advance diversity in her field and to honor the legacies of historically overlooked voices. Their "Hidden Voices" program highlights and celebrates the artistic contributions of historically marginalized musicians, composers, and educators. Their flagship "Shared Voices" initiative connects Historically Black Colleges and Universities with top music conservatories, expanding access and fostering inclusion for the next generation of artists.

Mr. Speaker, the remarkable career of Ms. Denyce Graves reflects a rare combination of artistic excellence and passionate leadership in education. Through her performances, advocacy, and mentorship, she has opened doors for countless artists and enriched the cultural fabric of our Nation. I am proud to celebrate this visionary artist whose story will inspire generations to come.

RECOGNIZING MOODY HIGH
SCHOOL FOR WINNING THE
AHSAA CLASS 1-5A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP IN GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL

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 the Moody High

School girls' flag football team for winning the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) 1-5A State Championship.

At Protective Stadium in Birmingham, Alabama, on December 3, 2025, the Moody flag football team, with a record of 22-3, secured the school's first state championship in flag football over Montgomery Catholic School with a score of 28-17.

The championship team from Moody, Alabama, is led by Coach Wren Moore and is the school's first flag football state title.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the Moody girls' flag football team, Coach Moore and the coaching staff, the faculty and fans on this exciting win for the school. I congratulate them and Go Blue Devils.

HONORING THOMAS UNERFUSSER
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 Captain Thomas Unerfusser of Denison, Texas, and to honor him with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Captain Unerfusser honorably served in the United States Air Force from 1985 to 2006.

Captain Unerfusser began his distinguished military career as an enlisted airman, achieving the rank of Technical Sergeant (E-6) before earning his commission as an officer, and rising to the rank of Captain (O-3E). His service took him to Altus Air Force Base, Loring Air Force Base, Vandenberg Air Force Base, and numerous other locations around the world. Throughout his career, he served in the Persian Gulf War, Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Desert Calm, Operation Northern Watch, and other classified missions across Europe and Africa.

For his exemplary service, Captain Unerfusser received numerous honors, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Achievement Medal. His dedication and excellence also earned him recognition as Boom Operator of the Year and Honor Guard of the Year, reflecting his professionalism, precision, and leadership both in the air and on the ground.

Following his distinguished military career, Captain Unerfusser continued his service to others by joining the Denison Police Department, where he achieved Master Police Officer certification. After retiring from the department, he continued his commitment to justice and public service as a Grayson County District Attorney Investigator. Captain Unerfusser remains active in the veteran community as a lifetime member of the Sherman Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Perrin Air Force Base Museum, the Air Force Sergeants Association, and the Air Force Association.

I am deeply honored to recognize Captain Thomas Unerfusser for his courage, patriotism, and lifelong devotion to serving others. He exemplifies the very best of Texas' 4th Congressional District and of the United States of America.