

HONORING 125 YEARS OF BLACK AVIATION

**HON. JASMINE CROCKETT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month, it's only right that I rise today to honor the rich history of 125 years of Black Aviation. I specifically would like to recognize the lives and contributions of two individuals who had the determination to fly in the face of discrimination and adversity.

Mr. John Frederick Pickering of Gonaïves, Haiti, applied for an aviation patent in 1899. The patent, granted in 1900, included an electric motor and directional controls, which later became known as the "blimp."

Mr. Charles Frederick Page of Pineville, Louisiana, was born into slavery, yet, taught himself to read and write. In 1903, Mr. Page applied for an aviation patent, which was awarded in April of 1906, just one month before the Wright Brothers' patent was approved. Mr. Page's patent advanced airship technology through his innovative design which improved stability, propulsion, and control of the airship.

Both pioneering Black men made their valuable contributions to the exciting world of aviation during a time of intense prejudice. It is incumbent upon us to know, recognize, and celebrate their works, talents, and great efforts. Today's aviation industry would not be what it is today without Mr. Page and Pickering's bravery and intelligence.

TRIBUTE TO BETTY HENDERSON

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of an extraordinary public servant, a trailblazing political activist, a cherished matriarch of her community, and a personal friend. Betty Henderson departed this life on February 8, 2025, leaving behind an indelible mark on Orangeburg County, the state of South Carolina, and beyond.

Betty Henderson was born on January 1, 1947, in Branchville, South Carolina, to the late Nuncie and Salte Williams. From an early age, she displayed a deep sense of determination and a passion for service. Educated in the public schools of Orangeburg County and New York City, she pursued further studies at The Citadel and the University of South Carolina, completing IAOO coursework. She also studied business at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College. Betty became a licensed real estate appraiser and spent over 15 years as a legal assistant at the Davis Law Firm in Orangeburg.

It was in public service where Betty Henderson's impact was most profoundly felt. For 28 years, she served as the Orangeburg County Tax Assessor, making history as the first African American female assessor in South Carolina. Her tenure was marked by an unwavering commitment to fairness and excellence, and she became the only African American ever inducted into the South Carolina Association of Assessing Officials Hall of Fame.

Betty's dedication to democracy and civic engagement extended far beyond her professional career. For over two decades, she served as Chair of the Orangeburg County Democratic Party, working tirelessly to increase voter participation and strengthen grassroots organizing. Under her leadership, the party secured opportunities for South Carolinians to meet then-Senator Barack Obama, a presidential candidate at the time, at Claflin University. She played a pivotal role in bringing the 2008 presidential debate to South Carolina State University. Betty also founded the party's cook-off fundraiser, which later became the Betty Henderson Elected Official Cook-Off, a testament to her enduring legacy.

In recognition of her outstanding leadership, she was named Chairperson Emeritus of the Orangeburg County Democratic Party after her retirement and was honored as the State County Democratic Chairperson of the Year at a South Carolina State Democratic Convention. Because of her tireless efforts, all county elected officials in Orangeburg today are Democrats.

Betty Henderson was also a pioneer in local government. She was the first African American since Reconstruction to be elected to the Branchville Town Council, where she served for twelve years, including ten years as Mayor Pro Tempore. She was deeply committed to the well-being of her community, serving on numerous boards, including the Orangeburg Family Health Center, the Orangeburg-Calhoun-Allendale-Bamberg (OCAB) Community Action Agency Board, the Orangeburg County Department of Social Services Board, the Regional Medical Center Board, and the CASA Family Systems Board. She was a proud and active member of the NAACP, White Rose Chapter No. 1, Queen of the National Order of the Eastern Star, and La Charm Club. A skilled organizer and strategist, Betty also managed many local, state, and national political campaigns, playing a vital role in shaping the political landscape of South Carolina.

Her lifelong commitment to service was recognized with numerous accolades, including Who's Who Among Women, the African American Women in Leadership Award, the NAACP Appreciation Award for Community Service, the American Business Women's Association Business Associate Award, the Kappa Alpha Psi Women of the Year Award, the South Carolina State University First Lady Scholarship Award, and the Unsung Hero in Politics Award.

Beyond her public service, Betty was a woman of deep faith. She was a devoted member of Canaan Baptist Church in Branchville, where she served as Budget Chair, Hospital Chair, and Program Committee Chair. Known by her family and friends as a beacon of compassion and generosity, she was always willing to extend a helping hand to those in need. Her life embodied the words she lived by:

If I can help someone as I pass along this way, then my living will not be in vain.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in honoring the remarkable life of Betty Henderson. Her tireless dedication to public service, political activism, and steadfast commitment to her community have left a lasting legacy. May we carry forward her spirit of service, and may she rest in peace.

HONORING THE FLEMINGTON JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Mr. KEAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Flemington Jewish Community Center (FJCC), which is marking the celebration of its 100th anniversary as a cherished spiritual and cultural home in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Since its founding, the FJCC has exemplified the spirit of community, service, and faith: principles that have guided it to its position as a flourishing center of Jewish life and learning.

The history of the FJCC stretches back to the early decades of the twentieth century, when a wave of Jewish farmers, inspired by the promise of opportunity and liberty from oppression, found their way to Hunterdon County. 1922 marks the founding of the Hebrew Citizens Congregation of Hunterdon County, the brief precursor to today's Flemington Jewish Community Center.

The FJCC's earliest permanent home was a small house on Park Avenue in Flemington, which was remodeled to suit the religious and cultural needs of its growing membership. During these formative years, the congregation's devotion to community and Jewish life was evident not only in weekly services and holiday observances, but also in robust cultural activities. Furthermore, as the world plunged into the Second World War, the Center turned its attention outward, raising funds for defense bonds and organizing to support displaced Jewish populations worldwide. The congregation's compassion, resourcefulness, and generosity established the Center as a moral beacon in Flemington and beyond.

In the post-war period, the FJCC renewed efforts to build a larger and more modern facility—a vision realized through a new synagogue on East Main Street, which was dedicated in 1948. Under the steady guidance of religious leaders like Rabbi Maurice Idell, and later Rabbi Evan Jaffe, the FJCC's mission expanded even further. Hebrew classes, a Ladies' Auxiliary, youth activities, and vibrant cultural programs created a profound strength of community.

As the congregation continued to thrive, it outgrew its Main Street home and, in 2006, celebrated the completion of a new 23,000-square-foot facility in Raritan Township. Under the guidance of Rabbi Eric Cohen, dedicated officers, staff, and volunteers, the congregation has embraced this modern space. From its Nursery and Hebrew Schools to adult education and dedicated interfaith outreach and charitable engagements, the FJCC stands today at the heart of Jewish life in Hunterdon County, and reaches members from Trenton to Princeton, and from Annandale to Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

As the earliest members hoped a century ago, the FJCC today is far more than a synagogue—it is a true community center. It provides a welcoming atmosphere for families on Friday evenings, Torah discussion on Saturdays, and learning opportunities for youth and adults alike. It brings together individuals of all backgrounds, reflecting the pluralism and mutual respect that are hallmarks of both American democracy and Jewish tradition. May it

continue to be a sanctuary where tradition thrives, learning flourishes, and community guides generations to come. On this 100th anniversary, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Flemington Jewish Community Center.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, please accept this personal explanation as I was unexpectedly detained during vote proceedings. Had I been present, I would have voted: NAY on Roll Call No. 34 and YEA on Roll Call No. 35.

#### HONORING THELMA CASTILLO

### HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Thelma Castillo for her decade of service as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce. Since 2014, Thelma has worked tirelessly to strengthen the Chamber's role as a champion for businesses in Michigan's Thumb region. Under her leadership, the Chamber experienced record growth, expanded its advocacy efforts, and enhanced its ability to support local businesses. Her impact has been profound, and her legacy will be felt for years to come.

A highly accomplished professional, Thelma brought over 18 years of chamber experience to her role, having previously served at the Detroit Regional Chamber, one of the largest and most influential chambers in the country. Her expertise in workforce initiatives, leadership development, economic advocacy, and operational excellence positioned her as a transformative leader in the Blue Water business community. Throughout her career, she secured over \$15 million in grants, funding programs that supported business expansion, workforce training, and economic development. One of her most notable initiatives was "Intern in Michigan," a statewide program designed to retain young professionals in the region through internship opportunities.

Thelma's leadership extends beyond the Chamber, as she served on numerous boards and organizations dedicated to economic growth, workforce development, and civic engagement. She was actively involved with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Organizational Management, the American Red Cross of Southeastern Michigan, the Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Hispanic Business Alliance, and the Workforce Innovations in Economic Development initiative. Her commitment to collaboration and strategic planning helped forge strong partnerships between businesses, educational institutions, and government entities.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Thelma is known for her passion, integrity, and unwavering commitment to the community. She is a devoted wife to Len Frisch, a Detroit firefighter, and a loving mother to her son, JJ Dominguez.

Mr. Speaker, Thelma Castillo's leadership, dedication, and vision have strengthened the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce and the broader business community. Her contributions have paved the way for continued economic growth and prosperity in the region. I thank her for her years of service and wish her all the best in this next chapter of her life.

#### THREAT TO ISRAELI DEMOCRACY

### HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD remarks submitted at the request of a Virginia Beach constituent, Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman of Temple Lev Tikvah, and are a reflection of his views:

I have returned from the torn Land of Israel where I grew up, following a visit throughout July of a shaking, even shocking experience. Israel is undergoing a trauma whose lasting impact is impossible to predict. However, the current internal crisis threatening Israeli democracy, the Middle East's sole one, is due to the most extreme coalition government in Israel's history attempting to alter its Western liberal orientation by disabling the Supreme Court's standing as an independent Judiciary. Consequently, the unprecedented mass demonstrations for months in opposition to the proposed radical agenda which I watched in disbelief and participated in, have reflected a powerful popular response determined to preserve Israel as both the Jewish and democratic state envisioned by its founders. Already adversely affected are the Israeli economy, military, public health, the woman's status, education, Pride community and society at large, while Israel's enemies, Iran and its proxies, become further emboldened. The special relationship between Israel and the United States is at risk as well as the essential bond between Israel and American Jewry.

With heartfelt, even prophetic pathos and deep grasp of the multi-layered Israeli scene since its inception and prior, veteran Israeli author Ari Shavit offers us a concise manifesto for urgent action with the goal of "Saving Israel," his recent book's alarming title (Saving Israel. Rishon LeZion: Miskal-Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books. 2023). He begins with a statement of both profound gratitude and grave concern, "the State of Israel is a miracle. No other nation did what we have: To build anew a national home following two thousand years. No progressive democracy succeeded to flourish as we have, following a Shoah and living under a volcano. Despite all the troubles, problems, weaknesses, difficulties and blemishes—The Zionist dream has been realized. The people of Israel lives and the state of Israel lives. Our sons and daughters have in our ancestral land what our grandfathers and grandmothers did not: Sovereignty, freedom, prosperity, pride and progress. Being a technological, economic, military and political super-power, Israel of the 21st century is a strong country capable of shaping its own fate and march toward a brilliant future. But the deep 2023 crisis threatens the Israeli miracle and erasing our astonishing successes, leaving us homeless."

Shavit does not mince words. On the one hand, heaps praise upon Israel's successes though Israel is not a global, as the author claims, but a regional superpower. In light of trying beginnings and facing monumental

challenges that were likely to doom the fragile creation: Attacks from a collection of superior military establishments while absorbing penniless immigrants from west and east three times larger in size, into a war zone with meager resources. On the other hand, he bemoans the Jewish people's destructive tendencies that brought down Jewish sovereignty and led into long exile and ultimately a consuming Holocaust. "And the Jewish people has multi-talents though sorrowfully it lacks the talent to be a people. It tends toward extremism, internal strife and self-destruction. . . Israel needs to be both powerful and ethical, both national and liberal, both Jewish and democratic. Only a combination of resoluteness and openness will guarantee that not weakness nor zealousness will bring us again to the pit's cusp."

The author is convinced that the goal is within reach though the hour is late and the Israelis with all their complexities and tribal tendencies ought not further delay. He thus concludes, "The good and silent great Israeli majority will not remain still. The democratic Jews will not let a wondrous national and human enterprise to go down. For all of us have a stake in this special place. And we all know that there wouldn't be a Fourth Commonwealth. The Third Commonwealth is the Jewish people's last opportunity. With determination, love and faith we'll defend Israel and rebuild the house."

#### HONORING ROSIE'S CAFÉ ON ITS SECOND ANNIVERSARY

### HON. GABE VASQUEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2025*

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rosie's Café and its owner, Jackie Chavira, on the café's second anniversary. Since it opened on January 21, 2023, Rosie's Café has served great food to the Grants community.

Jackie Chavira was born and raised in Grants and is incredibly proud to call it home. Jackie's parents opened Rosie's Laundry fourteen years ago, a testament to their hard work and dedication. After her mother retired, she encouraged Jackie to follow her own entrepreneurial path and open the restaurant. Jackie inherited her parents' unwavering work ethic and resilience, which shaped her journey. As her parents once told her, and she now tells her children, "The only thing you're going to inherit is hard work."

After Jackie purchased the building for Rosie's Café, she made several significant investments, including updating the plumbing, replacing the roof, and purchasing new equipment. With no prior experience in restaurant ownership, she faced a series of challenges along the way. She persevered through a winter without heat, a summer without air conditioning, and a monsoon season with a leaky roof and kept Rosie's Café open.

Jackie eventually joined the Chamber of Commerce and began attending meetings. These days, though she is more settled, Jackie continues to work tirelessly to keep the dream alive. Most recently, she earned her catering license, making her the only business in Grants licensed to cater.

Opening this restaurant was truly a labor of love for Jackie and her family, inspired by her mother's dream of owning a restaurant. Jackie