

REMEMBERING BREGGIE LEJUANE  
GILKEY

**HON. STEVE COHEN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 18, 2025*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise sadly today to remember one of my constituents, Breggie Lejuane Gilkey—a lifelong servant to the city of Memphis, a musician and the devoted father of my outstanding former staffer with a bright political future, Kyler Gilkey—who passed on December 13 at the age of 54.

Mr. Gilkey was born September 24, 1971, in Memphis, Tennessee, to Lilly R. Faulkner and Everett Gilkey. He attended Vollentine Elementary and Snowden School in Memphis, and graduated from Overton High School in 1989. He was a member of Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church. On September 23, 1995, he married his high school sweetheart, Roniece N. Gilkey, and they were together for 36 years, raising five sons: my former staffer Kyler and his brothers Bryson, Carson, Conner, and Bre'dyn. For years, he served the City of Memphis as a skilled mechanic. He was someone friends could rely on, not just for his expertise, but for his honesty, generosity, and willingness to help anyone in need. Beyond his work, Breggie had a deep love for music and played a meaningful role in Memphis' rich musical heritage. He worked with such legendary artists as The Bar-Kays and Shirley Brown and was a vocalist for Unexpected and The Temprees, contributing quietly but significantly to the sound and soul of the city he loved. He was also a volunteer with the STAX Music Academy and his sons' education while being an influential father figure to other young students who affectionately called him "Pops." Above all else, Breggie was a family man. He found his greatest joy in spending time with his loved ones and was known for his warmth, laughter, and calm presence. His compassion and love left an indelible mark on everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Breggie L. Gilkey leaves to cherish his memory, his loving and devoted wife Roniece; his five sons, Kyler Gilkey, Bryson Gilkey, Carson Gilkey, Conner Gilkey, and Bre'dyn Lovett; his parents, Lilly Gilkey, Everett Gilkey (Margree) and his siblings, Brandon Gilkey, Marvin Pride, Tinica Mitchell (Brandon), and Daphane Tyms (Eldon) and his many friends and colleagues. I extend my profound condolences to them all. Breggie Gilkey was a proud Memphian whose life was defined by hard work, creativity, and compassion. His was a life well lived.

THANKING LAURA FALENDER

**HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 18, 2025*

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of and express my deep gratitude for my Veterans Affairs Policy Fellow, Laura Falender, and her outstanding service to my office over the past year.

Since joining my team from the Department of Veterans Affairs earlier this year, Laura be-

came an integral member of my policy staff and helped spearhead my work on Veterans Affairs issues—especially as I have taken on the role of Ranking Member of the Technology and Modernization Subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. During her time in my office, Laura proved invaluable to both me and my staff, while also serving as a strong voice for veterans across my district and throughout the country. Upon joining our office, Laura also led several legislative initiatives. These include, but are certainly not limited to, the VA Mental Health Engagement Act, the Improving Veterans' Experience Act of 2025, and the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship Opportunity Act, which unanimously passed the House of Representatives earlier this year. Laura's dedication to improving access to benefits for our Nation's more than 18 million veterans played a significant role in her ability to expertly introduce and advance legislation in support of those who have served.

Beyond her policy contributions, Laura has been a key member of our team, helping to foster a culture of collaboration, camaraderie, and hard work.

While I am saddened to see Laura's time in my office come to an end, I am encouraged that she will continue her public service by returning to the Veterans Experience Office at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where she will build on her important work on behalf of our Nation's veterans.

I want to once again thank Laura Falender for her service to my office, our Nation's veterans, and my constituents. While she will be missed, I am confident she has a bright future ahead in public service.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION  
RECOGNIZING THE 90TH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN

**HON. MAXINE WATERS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 18, 2025*

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to introduce a resolution recognizing the 90th anniversary of the National Council of Negro Women, one of the most enduring and consequential organizations in the history of our country.

Ninety years ago, the incomparable Mary McLeod Bethune founded the National Council of Negro Women with a singular purpose: to unite Black women's organizations and strengthen our collective power to make a better world. She believed deeply in the strength of organized womanhood and the necessity of Black women's leadership in shaping the future of this Nation.

For generations, NCNW has carried that mission forward. It has stood at the forefront of movements for justice, equality, economic empowerment, and educational opportunity. It has been a training ground for advocates, a safe harbor for families, and a beacon of civic leadership.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to speak of NCNW without honoring the extraordinary legacy of my dear friend, Dr. Dorothy Irene Height. For 42 years, Dr. Height served as President of NCNW and transformed it into a

national powerhouse for civil and human rights. She was an advisor to presidents, a strategist for the movement, and a fierce defender of Black women's dignity and advancement.

Dr. Height's vision gave birth to programs that continue to shape our communities today—most notably the Black Family Reunion, a national celebration of culture, unity, and intergenerational strength. This gathering has helped reinforce the bonds that hold families together and affirm the values that empower us to overcome the challenges Black people face in America.

Today, under the leadership of Rev. Shavon Arline-Bradley, NCNW continues to grow its reach and impact. Its programs promote health equity, economic mobility, STEM education for girls, and community wellness. Its membership now represents more than two million women, spanning hundreds of community and collegiate sections and more than 330 affiliate organizations.

And for decades, its headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue has stood as a symbol of NCNW's enduring place in the civic landscape of Washington, D.C. The only Black-owned building on this historic avenue in our Nation's capital, it is a center of excellence, and a national treasure.

Mr. Speaker, as NCNW marks 90 years of service, it is important that this Congress acknowledge its contributions to the Nation, honor the women who built its legacy, and celebrate the generations who continue to carry its mission forward.

With this resolution, we recognize NCNW's historic work, its transformative leadership, and its unwavering commitment to strengthening Black families and communities. We honor the legacies of Mary McLeod Bethune and Dr. Dorothy Height, and we express our deep gratitude to Rev. Shavon Arline-Bradley and the millions of women who make NCNW a force for good in our country.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution and in celebrating the National Council of Negro Women on its 90th anniversary.

HONORING HAYNES KING

**HON. NATHANIEL MORAN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 18, 2025*

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Longview, Texas native Haynes King, on being named the Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year and ACC Offensive Player of the Year. These honors reflect an outstanding season and place him among the top players in one of college football's premier conferences.

Haynes King attended Longview High School, where he played for the Longview Lobos under his father, John King, who has served as head coach since 2004. As a junior in 2018, Haynes led Longview to its first state championship in 81 years, an achievement that brought a proud East Texas community together and remains a defining moment in Longview football history.

Longview football is known for toughness, discipline, and accountability. Those values shaped Haynes King early and followed him to

Georgia Tech, where he earned conference-wide recognition for his leadership, resilience, and performance under pressure.

His journey from Longview to the collegiate stage reflects the strength of East Texas families, coaches, and communities. Longview is proud of Haynes King, and I commend him, his family, and his coaches on this well-earned achievement.

HONORING MICHAEL KEANE ON 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 18, 2025*

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and honor Mr. Michael Keane on his retirement after 30 years of dedicated service to the United States House of Representatives. For three decades, Michael has been a steadfast presence within the Chief Administrative Office, and those of us who have had the privilege of working alongside him know just how deeply he has contributed to the strength and continuity of this institution.

Michael's journey to the House began with a deep appreciation for American history, earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees from California State University, Northridge. That grounding in history was evident in the pride he took in serving this institution, an institution he understood not just as a workplace, but as a living part of our Nation's democratic story.

From his earliest days as a Customer Account Counselor in Office Systems Management, Michael distinguished himself through his professionalism, his patience, and his commitment to helping others. His work ethic and reliability earned him a series of promotions, culminating in leadership roles in the Immediate Office of Logistics and Support, and later in Workflow Management. In each position, he brought clarity, steadiness, and a remarkable ability to solve problems before they became crises.

Michael played a key role in implementing major systems that improved the efficiency of House operations. He was also part of the first group of Office Coordinators, helping Member offices navigate services with greater ease. In his role managing Workflow Management, he strengthened communication between Logistics and Furnishings and became a trusted guide for departing Members navigating the close of their service.

Beyond the technical expertise and institutional knowledge, what stands out most about Michael is his character. Over the past 30 years, he has been a calm and reassuring presence through some of the most challenging moments in modern congressional history, including 9/11, the anthrax attacks, the pandemic, numerous transitions of Congress, and multiple changes in House leadership. His steady hand and quiet confidence helped keep this institution functioning when it mattered most.

As he enters retirement, Michael looks forward to spending more time with his children, his daughter Siobhan and his sons Rory and Colin, and embracing new opportunities and adventures. Knowing Michael, he will bring the

same dedication and good humor to this next chapter that he brought to his decades of service here.

On behalf of the entire House community, I extend my deepest gratitude to Michael Keane. His contributions have strengthened this institution, supported countless Members and staff, and upheld the dignity of public service. We wish him many years of happiness, fulfillment, and well-earned rest in retirement.

LOWER HEALTH CARE PREMIUMS FOR ALL AMERICANS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 18, 2025*

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my opposition to H.R. 6703, the so-called Lower Health Care Premiums for All Americans Act. This bill does nothing to address the health care affordability crisis and is full of tired, failed ideas from previous GOP efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Donald Trump and House Republicans have never had a health care plan for the American people. Despite having fifteen years to plan and come up with ways to improve or replace the ACA, they've only tried to repeal it—over 50 times. Republicans' failure to extend the ACA tax credits means that more than 20 million Americans will be paying twice as much on average to buy the same health care plan they have today. President Trump had no problem extending tax cuts for millionaires, billionaires, and large corporations in his Big Ugly Bill—yet he and his GOP cronies won't even extend temporary tax credits to help Americans afford their health care.

This did not need to happen. We're here because Republicans refused to work with Democrats and allowed for the longest government shutdown in U.S. history rather than come to the table and negotiate. The clock is ticking, and while I'm pleased that a few Republicans joined Democrats in an effort to extend the tax credits, this effort came too late. Americans are receiving notices about their premiums doubling and are making decisions right now to either pay exorbitantly higher rates, opt for a plan that offers less coverage, or go without health coverage altogether.

President Trump has put forward a fake alternative—junk health care plans and a \$1,000 HSA that will keep folks paying more for less. Do not be misled. This proposal will put millions of Americans health coverage at risk and will leave as many as 4 million Americans uninsured.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats have been sounding the alarm about the ACA tax credits for months, yet Republicans spent their time cutting a trillion dollars from the health care system instead. It is insulting to the American people that they waited until two weeks before the tax credits expire to introduce a half-baked plan that doesn't help anyone afford the skyrocketing prices and that they knew Democrats would not support. I oppose this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.

LOWER HEALTH CARE PREMIUMS FOR ALL AMERICANS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 17, 2025*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to include in the RECORD, two letters of opposition to H.R. 6703, the Lower Health Care Premiums for Americans Act, from AFL-CIO and AFSCME.

AFL-CIO,

*December 16, 2025.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the AFL-CIO, a federation of 64 affiliate unions representing 15 million working people across our economy, I urge you to oppose the Lower Health Care Premiums for All Americans Act (H.R. 6703) when it is considered on the House floor. Instead, we urge you to join Rep. Hakeem Jeffries's discharge petition to move a clean, three-year extension of the enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits which will expire on December 31.

H.R. 6703 is billed as the House Republicans' alternative to a straightforward extension of the ACA tax credits that lower health care premiums for millions of Americans. However, this legislation is a fundamentally flawed approach to health care coverage because it shifts costs to workers as it reduces costs for employers and insurance companies. It allows health plans to provide stripped-down coverage that does not comply with ACA essential benefits requirements in order to lower premium costs and claims expenses for employers and insurers. The costs of this policy, however, are borne by people with pre-existing conditions and chronic diseases that find their insurance does not cover the services they need. Further, it rewards low-road employers that seek a competitive edge by skimping on coverage for their workers.

The bill will steer workers into association health plans (AHPs), expanding plans that evade ACA requirements to cover essential health benefits. Providing skimpier coverage will lower premiums for employers but increase costs for people who find that needed services are not covered. In addition, AHPs have a track record of poor management and insolvency, and plan bankruptcies have left thousands of working people with unpaid medical bills.

The legislation would also allow employer health plans to avoid the ACA requirement that insured plans cover essential health benefits. The policy allows plans that are unable to self-fund with adequate reserves to instead purchase a high level of stop-loss insurance to become 'self-insured' and evade ACA requirements. Lack of adequate reserves leave many of these plans, and their enrollees, at risk since stop-loss insurers often retain the right to drop the insurance if medical costs for the group begin to climb. The bill prevents states from ensuring that plans have the reserves necessary to protect enrollees with high medical expenses from financial ruin if their health plan becomes insolvent.

It is imperative that the House reject H.R. 6703 and move to advance Rep. Jeffries's discharge petition to hold a floor vote on a three-year extension of the ACA tax credits. With only weeks to spare before the 2026 plan year begins, Congress must act to prevent premiums from doubling or tripling for more than 20 million people, and to keep almost 4 million people from losing their health coverage altogether. Action is also needed to