

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING RUBY JUANITA FLEMING BRIDGEFORTH AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Ruby Juanita Fleming Bridgeforth is a retired executive from the United States Postal Service with 27 years of leadership experience in customer service, training, processing, and distribution. As the senior plant manager of the Central Florida District, she directed processing and distribution centers in Orlando, Sanford, and West Palm Beach. Ruby was instrumental in improving mail service to the Central Florida community by driving the district's performance ranking in the United States from No. 72 to No. 5 within three years. As a trailblazer, she was the first Black senior plant manager of the Central Florida District, the first postmaster/metro manager for Memphis, Tennessee, and the first Black female plant manager in the Orlando and Memphis processing and distribution centers.

Her education includes a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Music Education. She has also earned leadership development certificates from Eckerd College and Harvard Business School. Ruby has received numerous awards, including the Postmaster General Team award, two Vice President awards, and the Zeta Phi Beta Woman of the Year award. Ruby has also been featured in several publications for her accomplishments, including Jet, Grace, and Southern Women magazines. Her community service includes being the treasurer of the Osceola County Branch of the NAACP and a Golden Soror of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Omicron Omega Chapter. Additional community outreach includes partnering with a few friends to provide care bags to the homeless.

Prior to her postal career, Ruby taught music at Cotton Plant Public Schools in Cotton Plant, Arkansas. Her love of teaching has continued as an Osceola County Public School substitute teacher, Sunday School teacher at St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church, and instructor at Mount Pleasant Bible Academy. She is married to Rev. Anthony C. Bridgeforth and they have three sons and two grandchildren. Her priorities are God, family, and "service to all mankind."

HONORING FIRE CAPTAIN BRET BUTLER

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Fire Captain Bret Butler,

a dedicated and courageous member of the Lake Pillsbury Fire Protection District. I have named Captain Butler as the California 4th District's Public Safety Hero of the Year for Lake County in recognition of his extraordinary selflessness, leadership, and unwavering commitment to protecting his community.

Captain Butler was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and raised in Walnut Creek, California. He graduated from Northgate High School before pursuing studies at the Controlled Data Institute in San Francisco. After spending much of his professional life in Concord, he retired to his cabin—now his permanent home—in the Rice Fork community of Lake Pillsbury.

Captain Butler has been a steadfast leader in the Lake Pillsbury Fire Protection District, where he has risen through the ranks from Firefighter to Fire Captain. In addition to his operational leadership, he serves as the Federal Excess Equipment Program coordinator with CalFire. He also demonstrated remarkable bravery during the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire, aiding in firefighting efforts and the evacuation of a Hotshot crew. Within the community, he is widely regarded as the unofficial "Mayor" and "Real Estate Agent" of our Rice Fork community due to his deep-rooted involvement and dedication to the well-being of its residents. Captain Butler is happily married to his wife, Debra Butler.

Beyond his firefighting duties, Captain Butler has made countless contributions to the Lake Pillsbury community. He played a crucial role in procuring and installing mile marker signs along the 36-mile stretch of road in the Lake Pillsbury Basin, greatly improving emergency response times. He has also been a key advocate for evacuation route improvements, drone mapping projects, and defensible space initiatives, particularly for seniors and veterans. Additionally, he facilitated the donation of an ambulance and fire engine to the district and personally installed a solar system for Fire Station 2.

Mr. Speaker, Fire Captain Bret Butler's courage, leadership, and dedication to service have had a profound impact on his community. His selfless actions during the Mendocino Complex Fire and his ongoing contributions to public safety exemplify the very best of our first responders. It is with great honor and deep appreciation that we recognize him today.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN HERO DONALD GRAVES

**HON. BETH VAN DUYNE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Corporal Donald "Don" Graves, a Fort Worth resident and distinguished World War II veteran. Graves left high school in 1942 at just 17

years old to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps, inspired by his father's service. He served as a flamethrower in the Second Battalion of the 28th Marine Regiment of Iwo Jima.

Of the 335 Marines that landed on the island, only 18, including Graves, made it off. His strength and courage were displayed as he survived the intense, three-day long battle, climbing toward the top of Mount Suribachi. On the third day, Graves and his fellow Marines climbed to the summit before reaching the top and raising the U.S. flag.

Graves served for four years, leaving the service for civilian life after the war ended. It was in the heat of battle for Iwo Jima that he discovered his faith, leading him to serve in the ministry for 32 years.

As Graves celebrates his 100th birthday later this year, we honor his incredible journey. I thank Corporal Graves for his service and the lasting impact he has made on our country.

RECOGNIZING MR. ALEX J. WILSON

**HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN**

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding young leader, Alex J. Wilson, a student at Cass Job Corps in Ozark, Arkansas. Alex is currently enrolled in the Heavy Equipment Operations Pre-Apprentice Trade, where he has demonstrated exceptional leadership, service, and perseverance—qualities that embody the Cass Cougar spirit.

Alex's leadership extends far beyond the classroom. As the Student Government Association President and a Student Ambassador for the Youth-to-Youth initiative, he is a dedicated voice for his peers, advocating for their needs and championing opportunities for student success. Through the Youth-to-Youth program, Alex has worked to combat violence and drug use while promoting positive mental health on campus.

His servant-style leadership is evident in his commitment to both his fellow students and the broader community. As a member of the Cass Job Corps Fire Crew, Alex has trained extensively to serve and protect, further exemplifying his dedication to helping others. Recognizing the challenges new students face, he implemented a volunteer program with Needy Paws, a local animal shelter, providing students with an opportunity to ease stress and homesickness through service.

Alex's impact reaches beyond campus through his involvement in numerous community service projects. He has participated in a River Valley event honoring local veterans, served as Sergeant at Arms for Bumpers North Dorm, and was selected for the Cass Community Leadership Program. His commitment to excellence also earned him a spot in

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

a real-world work experience opportunity with the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District.

Alex attributes his passion for Heavy Equipment Operations to the mentorship of his instructors, Mr. Chris Wilson and Mr. Hibbs, who have instilled in him the values of discipline, hard work, and innovation. Their guidance has fueled his ambition to secure an apprenticeship with the International Union of Operating Engineers—a goal I have no doubt he will achieve.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, Alex J. Wilson exemplifies the very best of our young leaders. His work ethic, commitment to service, and ability to elevate others will undoubtedly lead him to success. I am proud to recognize Alex today and wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

#### HONORING JOHN C. EGERTSON

#### HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend John C. Egerton, County Administrator of Culpeper County, Virginia, on his retirement after a remarkable career in public service.

Mr. Egerton began his career in public service in 1986 as a planning technician, quickly advancing to the role of zoning administrator a year later. His commitment to leadership only deepened over time, culminating in his selection as County Administrator by the Board of Supervisors in April 2016.

For more than 25 years, Mr. Egerton has served as a steadfast leader and dedicated steward of Culpeper County's government. As County Administrator, he has overseen the daily operations of county departments, implemented the directives of the Board of Supervisors, and served as a vital liaison between the Board and state and regional agencies. His leadership has been instrumental in advancing initiatives that have strengthened the community and improved the quality of life for all residents.

Throughout his career, Mr. Egerton has been deeply involved in various organizations and committees, including the Town and County Interaction, Human Services Board, Chamber of Commerce, Piedmont Workforce Development, Career Partners, Airport Committee, Criminal Justice Board, E-911 Board, Public Safety Board, and the Joint Capital Planning Board.

Under Mr. Egerton's guidance, Culpeper County has achieved numerous milestones, including recognition for excellence in financial reporting and innovative programs that have fostered civic engagement and community pride. His commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and collaborative governance has left a lasting legacy that will benefit Culpeper County for generations to come. As he embarks on this new chapter of his life, I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Egerton for his dedicated service and exemplary leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Egerton on his retirement and wishing him continued success and happiness in the years ahead.

#### HONORING TAMIKA HOLLEY AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

#### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Tamika Holley was born on September 12, 1975, in Orlando, Florida, to Charlotte Gray and Bishop Gary Gray, both from Osceola County. She graduated from Osceola High School. She is the mother of three children, the grandmother of three beautiful granddaughters, and the extraordinary wife of 25 years to Bishop A.L. Holley.

For the last 20 years, Tamika has worked in the Marydia community, where she grew up. She has a passion for changing the lives of our youth and exemplifies outstanding qualities when working with at-risk youth. She has strong communication skills and can effectively interact with at-risk juveniles and their families. Her patience and empathy for youth help her understand the complex issues faced by the youth today. She supersedes crisis management skills with her ability to respond to and de-escalate potentially dangerous situations quickly.

Tamika has an associate degree in science in early childhood education, and she teaches a wide variety of activities designed to promote children's cognitive and social development before entering kindergarten. Some programs primarily focus on school and academic readiness, while her passion and love embrace the "whole child," which makes her approach to working with early childhood children so creative.

Tamika is also an active member of Kid Vision Network and the Florida League of Christian Schools. She also has experience working with children with special needs and teaching preschool and after-school. She's had the privilege of administrating a large childcare center for five years. She loves having the opportunity to guide and teach little minds. There is no better feeling than knowing you have helped to brighten a child's day and seeing their faces and expressions while they experience and learn new things.

Tamika worked at the Osceola County Children's Home for five years. She is currently working with the Boys and Girls Club of Central Florida, Marydia Branch, and is the caretaker of the Marydia Community Center, where she creatively hosts monthly activities for the community and the surrounding areas. Some of the events she hosts annually include the Community Friendship Dance, an Easter Celebration, a community picnic for Water Day, Back-to-School events, a Fall Festival, and a Thanksgiving community dinner and turkey giveaway. Other programs include the Senior Coffee House and Marydia Community Garden.

Tamika witnessed the incredible acts of kindness, resilience, and collaboration that make our neighborhoods unique. She has made a tangible difference in the lives of so many residents. Tamika has been the New Harvest Kingdom Covenant Church pastor for the past seven years following her father's demise.

#### HONORING MICHAEL ROBINSON

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 21, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Emergency Medical Technician Michael "Mike" Robinson of the Medic Ambulance Service's Solano Division. I have named Mr. Robinson as the California 4th District's Public Safety Hero of the Year for Solano County because of his extraordinary selflessness, dedication, and service to others.

Born and raised in Woodland, California, Michael pursued his passion for emergency services by earning associate degrees in Fire Science and Business before beginning his career with Medic Ambulance Service in 2012 as a Wheelchair/Gurney Van Technician. His dedication to serving his community and helping his patients led Mr. Robinson to quickly rise through the ranks to Emergency Medical Technician, officially becoming a certified paramedic in 2017.

Amid the national healthcare provider shortage brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Robinson stepped up to become a paramedic preceptor. In this role, he shared his years of experience and depth of knowledge with interns, supporting them in obtaining their paramedic licenses. In recognition of his outstanding service to our Solano County community, Mr. Robinson was bestowed the prestigious Stars of Life award by the American Ambulance Association in 2023.

Mr. Robinson is also a pivotal member of Medic Ambulance's emergency response team. A notable emergency in 2024 demonstrates Mr. Robinson's exceptional leadership while precepting an intern in the field. Dispatched with the intern to aid a citizen who had been shot in the chest, Mr. Robinson quickly assessed the patient had diminished lung sounds and was struggling to draw in oxygen. Under his steady guidance, the intern performed a needle thoracostomy, which immediately improved the patient's breathing and blood oxygen levels. Thanks to Mr. Robinson's decisive actions and leadership, the patient made a full recovery.

Beyond his work in the field, Mr. Robinson has played a crucial role in improving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Solano County's Emergency Medical Services. Mr. Robinson mentors interns and aspiring paramedics, contributes to company initiatives aimed at improving ambulance technology, and takes on extra shifts to support his colleagues. Additionally, he represents the Field Training Officers in the Medic Ambulance quality assurance program, ensuring high standards of patient care, and serves as a shop steward for the union.

Outside of his professional commitments, Mr. Robinson is a devoted father to his three children, Sandy, Abby, and Hailey. Michael finds joy in spending time with his family, enjoying outdoor adventures like camping and fishing, and passionately engaging in his favorite sport, hockey. Mr. Robinson is also deeply involved in his local church, where he has led youth group meetings and taught Sunday School classes for the past five years.

Mr. Speaker, Emergency Medical Technician Mike Robinson's expertise and dedication