

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF STEVEN D. FOLKS, SR. AS CITY MANAGER OF ANNISTON, ALABAMA

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Steven Folks as City Manager for Anniston, Alabama.

Mr. Folks received an associate's degree from Gadsden State Community College and a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University. He spent 21 years honorably serving our country in the United States Army Military Police Corp/Regiment. During his service, his assignments included Military Police instructor, Platoon Sergeant, Senior Drill Sergeant, First Sergeant and Battalion Operations Sergeant. He was honorably retired in 1995.

Mr. Folks came to work for the City of Anniston on April 10, 1995, as Recreation Leader. In July of 1996, he was promoted to Recreation Center Director at Carver Community Center and established the Good Choices Program. In March of 2007, Mr. Folks was promoted to Parks and Recreation Director. He was appointed interim City Manager in June of 2019 and became City Manager on October 28, 2019. He is an active member of the International City/County Management Association and the Alabama City/County Management Association.

Mr. Folks has been married to his wife, Vickie, for 42 years. They were blessed with three sons: Shannon (deceased), Dewan and Steven, Jr. They are the proud grandparents of nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Mr. Folks serves as an ordained Deacon with Mission Church of God by Faith Ministry, where his wife serves as the Pastor.

On April 10, 2025, Mr. Folks will retire from the City of Anniston after 30 years of service.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Steven Folks for his retirement and thanking him for his dedication and service to our country and to the City of Anniston. I congratulate Mr. Folks.

HONORING DIDIER WILLIAM

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the extraordinary artistic achievements and cultural contributions of internationally acclaimed artist Didier William. Born in Haiti and raised in North Miami, Mr. William has made an indelible mark on the art world, using his talent to elevate stories of identity, resilience, and heritage.

In 2022, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in North Miami hosted Didier William's first major museum exhibition. The exhibit garnered widespread acclaim, receiving prominent coverage in *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, and *The Miami Herald*. As part of his deep commitment to giving back to the community that nurtured him, Mr. William generously created a limited-edition print, distributing it to 200 North Miami families and organizations—a testament to his dedication to accessibility and engagement in the arts.

Mr. William holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting from The Maryland Institute College of Art and a Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University's School of Art. His passion for education and mentorship has led him to teach at some of the Nation's most prestigious institutions, including the Yale School of Art, Vassar College, Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, and SUNY Purchase. He currently serves as an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University.

His remarkable work has been featured in esteemed institutions such as the Bronx Museum of the Arts, The Carnegie Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and The Figge Art Museum. His artistic excellence is recognized globally, with representation by James Fuentes Gallery in New York, Altman Siegel Gallery in San Francisco, and Galerie Peter Kilchmann in Zurich, Switzerland.

Didier William's profound impact on the art world and his unwavering commitment to community engagement exemplify the power of art to inspire, connect, and transform. His work continues to challenge perspectives and celebrate cultural narratives that resonate far beyond North Miami.

Mr. Speaker, please join me as I am honored to recognize Didier William for his exceptional contributions to the arts and his dedication to enriching the cultural fabric of our Nation and beyond.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I recently gave birth and am unable to travel to D.C. to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 54, and YEA on Roll Call No. 55.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF EDUCATORS RISING

HON. JENNIFER L. McCLELLAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Educators Rising.

Established in 1937, Educators Rising, formally known as the Future Teachers of America, serves as a nationwide movement dedicated to eliminating the teacher shortage in America by recruiting, preparing, and inspiring the next generation of educators. The Future Teachers Association evolved into the Future Educators Association and was acquired by PDK International in 1994 and rebranded as Educators Rising in 2015.

Educators Rising is a community-based Career and Technical Student Organization within Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) International that develops middle and high school students in rural, urban, and suburban communities to become highly skilled educators in the communities where they live.

As a "Grow Your Own" initiative, Educators Rising helps create diverse teaching workforces that reflect communities where students live. Teachers who share similar backgrounds and experiences with their students foster stronger student-teacher relationships and improved academic outcomes, including higher test scores, rates of high school graduation and college enrollment, more inclusive school climates, fewer suspensions, and lower rates of chronic absenteeism.

With over 1,400 school chapters and 38 state-level partnerships, Educators Rising has a presence in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. It continues to work with institutions of higher education and State Departments of Education to create seamless transitions into the education field.

In Virginia, over 70 schools have an Educators Rising Chapter that contributes to ending the teacher shortage in America, including eight in Virginia's 4th District. Since 1994, over 325,000 students have participated in Educators Rising, including nearly 145,600 students since its 2015 rebranding.

With over 60 percent of K–12 educators in the United States teaching within 20 miles of the high school they attended, creating pathways for local talent to enter the teaching profession plays a critical role in addressing our nation's shortage of teachers. PDK International awards nearly 100 scholarships annually, ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, to students pursuing careers in education through Educators Rising and other PDK International programs.

I commend Educators Rising's work to recruit local and diverse talent while building career pathways for educators as a solution to addressing teacher shortages in communities across the country. Their hard work and commitment to producing driven teachers is remarkable and essential to the development of a student's academic success.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

HONORING JUDY REPKING'S PRO-LIFE ADVOCACY

HON. MIKE BOST

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judy Repking of Effingham County, Illinois, my special guest for President Trump's Joint Address to Congress this evening. Judy and her husband, Paul, have been tireless advocates for the cause of innocent, unborn babies for more than 20 years.

Judy rose to the level of chairman of the Bishop's Pro-Life Committee in 2016, where she kept her community informed on key legislative and policy issues. Since 2018, she has served on the board of Effingham Area Right to Life, leading efforts to educate the public, organize events, and oppose policies that threaten innocent life.

Since 2010, Judy and Paul have traveled to regional parades with Effingham Area Right to Life's float and helped run the pro-life booth at the Effingham County Fair. Judy also plays a key role organizing the Annual Pro-Life Fundraising Breakfast, raising critical funds for organizations supporting moms, families, and unborn children.

She has attended the annual March for Life in Springfield, Illinois, and organized major pro-life events, including the Illinois Right to Life Advocacy Update and the Prayer for America event at the Cross at the Crossroads in Effingham.

Due to her steadfast leadership on a cause that is near and dear to my heart, I knew Judy would be an ideal guest to join us for President Trump's historic first address to Congress of his second term.

Please join me in welcoming Judy and Paul Repking to the People's House for this very special occasion. She has inspired many with her work educating, inspiring, and mobilizing her community in defense of life.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF SERGEANT CHRISTINE BETTIS

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Sergeant Christine Bettis on her retirement after twenty-seven years of dedicated service to the Michigan State Police. I thank Sergeant Bettis for her tireless work to keep the citizens of Northern Michigan safe.

After graduating from the Michigan State Police 117th Recruit School in 1998, Sergeant Bettis began her distinguished career in law enforcement with her first assignment at Reed City Post 62. Setting a standard of commitment and excellence, Sergeant Bettis's service extended to a variety of assignments, includ-

ing time with Governor Rick Snyder's Detail in 2011, Houghton Lake Post 72, West Branch Post 32, and Tri-City Post 31. Eventually, Sergeant Bettis returned to West Branch Post 32, where she served her final assignment.

Throughout her career, Sgt. Bettis was often recognized for her professionalism, excellence, kindness, and fairness. Her approach to policing was always rooted in integrity and understanding, qualities that were exemplified in her interactions with the public and her peers. Fellow officers remember fondly her compassion for animals which extended into the line of duty.

Beyond her law enforcement duties, Sgt. Bettis has been a consistent mentor and friend to her colleagues. Known as "Mom" at West Branch Post 32, she provided unwavering support to her peers, always ready with a smile and her characteristic wit. Her presence brought warmth and camaraderie to the department, leaving a lasting impact on those who had the privilege of working alongside her.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in congratulating Sergeant Christine Bettis for a remarkable career with the Michigan State Police. I wish her great happiness in retirement and thank her once more for keeping Michigan's First Congressional District safe.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF BEVERLY DENISE BUCKHANNAN GRABEN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Beverly Graben from my Oxford District Office.

Beverly, a native of Clay County, Alabama, was born on May 6, 1959, to W.T. and Eulene Buckhannan. She graduated from Lineville High School in 1977 and married Andy Dale Graben on April 8, 1979. Beverly obtained a cosmetology degree from Ayers State Technical College. She and Andy have been blessed with two sons: Adam (married to Jayme) and Kevin (married to Kimberly). They have five grandchildren who are the light of Beverly's life: Seth, Ella Jaymes, William, Charlotte and Joseph.

Beverly is a former member of Center West Baptist Church and currently attends Barfield Baptist Church.

Beverly has worked at Burger Quick, RL Harris Dam, Graben Wood Products, Midway Ford, Wright and Sprayberry Insurance and former Congressman Bob Riley. Beverly has worked for me since I took office in 2003. She is an outstanding employee and has a heart for the people of Alabama's Third Congressional District. She will be greatly missed.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Beverly for her retirement and thanking her for her dedication and service to our great State of Alabama. I congratulate Beverly.

HONORING WILLIAM LEHMAN, JR.

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor William M. Lehman, Jr., a distinguished businessman, philanthropist, and dedicated community leader. Born and raised in Miami, Florida, Mr. Lehman is a graduate of Miami Edison High School. He furthered his education at the University of Alabama and obtained an MBA from Harvard Business School before serving two years in the United States Army.

In 1967, Mr. Lehman took over the management of his family-owned Buick dealership in North Miami, originally established by his father in 1936. Over the years, he expanded his business ventures to include a variety of automobile dealerships, selling brands such as Toyota, Hyundai, Buick, GMC, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Saab, Mazda, Opel, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, Subaru, and Suzuki, among others. His leadership also led to the establishment of several automobile finance and leasing companies, including William Lehman Leasing (since 1968), Affiliated Financial Corporation, and Local Finance, a subprime automobile lending company founded in 2001.

By 2017, sales by Mr. Lehman's affiliated companies exceeded \$550 million, with retail and lease contract financing reaching nearly \$30 million. His contributions to the automotive industry have been a significant driver of South Florida's economic growth.

Beyond his business acumen, Mr. Lehman is an avid philanthropist and art collector. He currently serves as Chair Emeritus of the Board of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in North Miami. His father, Congressman William Lehman, played a pivotal role in securing a \$2.5 million HUD grant to build MOCA, while his mother, Joan Lehman, donated artworks to the museum's permanent collection and has her name on the building. Under Mr. Lehman's leadership, MOCA has expanded its board, hosted internationally recognized exhibitions, and built upon its 28-year legacy of offering free art-making programs for all ages.

Mr. Lehman is also a dedicated community leader, having served as President of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Executive Vice President of the Board of Directors of Florida International University, and President of both the South Florida Auto Dealers Association and the Michael Ann Russell Jewish Community Center. His civic contributions have left an indelible mark on South Florida and its residents.

Mr. Speaker, please join me as I am honored to recognize the extraordinary contributions of William M. Lehman, Jr. His legacy of business excellence, philanthropic generosity, and community service continues to inspire us all.