

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING FLORIDA HOUSE  
REPRESENTATIVE LAUREN MELO

**HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of an inspiring leader and pillar in our Southwest Florida community, Florida House Representative Lauren Uhlich Melo, in recognition of Women's History Month.

From an early age, Representative Melo expressed a calling to serve those in her community. Her first step in becoming the servant leader we know today began when she chose to volunteer with the Florida Guardian ad Litem program. As a Guardian ad Litem, she was responsible for representing the best interests of a minor child, an incapacitated adult, or other vulnerable individual in a legal case, a job few can or are willing to take on.

When the time came to begin a new chapter of her life and career, Representative Melo transitioned towards pursuing business administration which allowed her to start a thriving enterprise in Southwest Florida. In 1991, Representative Melo founded her own trucking company with nothing but a single truck, eventually growing the fleet to over 100 trucks and providing vital job opportunities for our community. While many know her for being a formidable entrepreneur, Representative Melo has likewise proven herself to be a dauntless fighter in the face of great adversity. Nothing demonstrated this more clearly than when she was forced to confront one of life's toughest battles: a fight against breast cancer. Even as she served her community and supported her son, Dare, who was then deployed on his first combat mission to Afghanistan, Representative Melo was forced to face her own war on her health at home. During a year-and-a-half battle with breast cancer, she continued to lead her business without interruption and remained a resilient and stalwart presence in her community. Despite these hardships, Representative Melo's health improved, as she bravely beat back the cancer, her firm remained successful, and she was able to welcome her son home as a combat veteran.

To this day, Representative Melo's personal fight against breast cancer has fueled her advocacy for related causes. She actively participates with the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation's Virtual Advocacy Days, while being a dedicated advocate for veterans, understanding firsthand the sacrifices that military families make. Her passion and service for her community ultimately culminated in her decision to run for state office herself and becoming an exceedingly effective legislator. Most recently, in 2020, Lauren was elected as the State Representative for Florida's District 80, and following redistricting, now represents District 82. Her re-election in both 2022 and 2024 are a testament to her continued leadership and the trust her constituents have in her ability

to understand their needs and to work tirelessly for them.

Representative Melo is not just a public servant—she is a survivor, devoted wife to her husband Robert Melo, a proud mother to her three children, Rachele, Dare, and Annabelle, and a loving grandmother to her two grandchildren, Ruby and Lily.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us reflect on the incredible contributions of women like Representative Lauren Uhlich Melo. It is an honor to recognize her today, and I look forward to witnessing the impact she will continue to have on our community and beyond.

RECOGNIZING MS. KAREN PARTIN

**HON. CHARLES J. "CHUCK"  
FLEISCHMANN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate and recognize Ms. Karen Partin, who, on January 30, 2025, completed 1 million miles of long-haul driving without an accident.

Ms. Partin is a professional long-haul truck driver for McKee Foods Corporation based in Collegedale, Tennessee. She began her career at McKee Foods Corporation in September 1987. Starting in the Manufacturing Production Area, Karen first transferred to Shipping, then to the Transportation Department Dispatch Office approximately eleven years later. Fast-forward four more years, in 2002, she moved to Corporate Fleet Safety, where she began to learn about Safety in the trucking industry.

In 2004, Karen chose to work part-time to fulfill her lifelong dream of being a long-haul truck driver. Karen returned to school to pursue a CDL. Two years later, Karen was a full-time professional semi-truck driver, bringing with her an abundance of safety knowledge from her time in Corporate Fleet Safety. The American Trucking Research Institute confirms that women make up only 8.1 percent of all U.S. professional truck drivers and only 2.7 percent of over-the-road truck drivers.

Always a goal-setter, Karen began the pursuit of reaching one million safe miles. It is a milestone for every professional truck driver and an especially difficult goal for a woman professional truck driver. Since her professional driving career began in 2006, Karen has continued to further her education, completing, with Honors, a Business Management course through Cleveland State Community College. Karen recently completed an Advanced Critical Thinking course offered by McKee Foods and is continuously completing learning courses through LinkedIn Learning.

Karen is a member of Women in Trucking and She Trucking. Her employer, McKee Foods, recently recognized Karen as a Road Team Captain with the Tennessee Trucking

Association. As a Road Team Captain, Karen visits local schools to teach students how to share the road safely with big trucks and promote the professional truck driving profession. Karen is a role model for young adults, particularly women, to consider trucking and logistics as a career.

Karen promotes a healthy lifestyle for herself and other professional truck drivers. She emphasizes the need to stay fit and healthy is vital as a long-haul truck driver. Karen is also the proud mother of two sons and has one granddaughter.

I am honored to recognize Karen Partin for completing this unique and coveted milestone.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 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. 74; NAY on Roll Call No. 75; and NAY on Roll Call No. 76.

HONORING ZOE PRIETO

**HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable woman whose lifelong dedication to service has profoundly impacted the lives of countless children and families in South Florida. Zoe Prieto, a devoted leader, mother, grandmother, and cancer survivor, has spent decades ensuring that children in need receive the resources, support, and opportunities they otherwise might not.

For the past 13 years, Zoe has served as President of the Children in Action Foundation, a nonprofit organization established in 1996 to support underserved children in Miami-Dade County and beyond. From the moment she took on this role, she has remained relentless in her pursuit of guaranteeing that the Foundation live out its mission of "Making a Difference One Child at a Time".

Under Zoe's leadership, the Foundation has provided school supplies, holiday meals, Christmas gifts, and financial assistance for medical treatments to children and families who need them most. Operating entirely through volunteer efforts, the organization has grown to serve 28 elementary schools across communities in South Florida, impacting the lives of countless families across Florida's 26th congressional district. Through every season of the year, Zoe and the Children in Action Foundation are present to serve our community. At the start of the school year, the Foundation personally delivers backpacks

• 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.

filled with school supplies to 350 students. At Thanksgiving, 200 families receive baskets filled with turkeys and meal essentials. During the holiday season, over 400 children gather for a Christmas toy giveaway, where they are treated to a day of games and a special holiday meal. Every child receives a wrapped toy, and 100 bicycles are raffled to spread even more joy. No matter the time of year, and in instances where many families feel the strain the most, Zoe and the Foundation are there to stand in the breach.

Looking to the future, Zoe and her team are working to expand their impact even further by launching summer and after-school programs that will provide children, including those with special needs, with opportunities to grow and develop strong values of good citizenship and volunteerism. Their undying drive to serve and to meet the members of our community where they are only serves to build on their growing legacy across South Florida.

Beyond her leadership, Zoe's personal resilience serves as an inspiration to all who know her. A brave cancer survivor of 37 years, she has long embodied the spirit of hope and of perseverance and has pushed through adversity to share that with those around her. Through her efforts, she has given children joy when starting a new school year and given parents the relief of knowing their child can receive the medical care they need.

Zoe Prieto is a shining example in our community of a servant leader. Her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children and families exemplifies the true spirit of Women's History Month. It is with great admiration and appreciation that I recognize and celebrate Zoe Prieto's contributions toward "Making a Difference One Child at a Time".

#### TRIBUTE TO JESSICA MILLAN PATTERSON

#### HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 26, 2025*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Jessica Millan Patterson, who is stepping down as the Chairwoman of the California Republican Party, after serving in that role since 2019. Jessica has been a true leader in the Golden State and served as an effective advocate for the Republican Party.

Prior to her election as Chairwoman, Jessica held staff positions with the California Republican Party, Republican National Committee, and statewide and national candidates for more than two decades, including leadership positions for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and Senator John McCain. Jessica then co-founded and served as CEO of California Trailblazers, a candidate recruitment and training organization modeled after the national Young Guns program.

In 2019, Jessica was elected as Chairwoman of the California Republican Party. In that role Jessica made diverse community engagement a priority, recruiting and supporting candidates who reflect the districts they hoped to serve. She brought the Republican Party to communities, where it may have never been before to engage voters about the party's mission and learn about the issues that matter

most to residents. After an historic 2020 election cycle in which Republicans picked up House seats in California, Jessica was re-elected for a second term in 2021 and a third and final term in the spring of 2023. Under her leadership, Republicans also picked up California seats in 2022, that helped secure a Republican House majority.

Jessica clearly possesses a passionate belief in shaping a brighter future for California and a dedication to the Republican Party she has served so faithfully. On behalf of the entire California Republican House Delegation, I want to express my heartfelt thanks and praise for Jessica's significant contributions. I wish Jessica and her family the very best in the years to come.

#### SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

#### MEETINGS SCHEDULED

##### APRIL 1

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Lieutenant General John D. Caine (Retired), to be general and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense.

SD-G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine S. 222, to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to allow schools that participate in the school lunch program to serve whole milk.

SR-328A

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine certain nominations.

SD-419

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.

SR-418

2:30 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy, and Consumer Rights

To hold hearings to examine big fixes for big tech.

SD-226

##### APRIL 2

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine restoring Boeing's status as a great American manufacturer, focusing on safety first.

SD-G50

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Katharine MacGregor, of Florida, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, and James Danly, of Tennessee, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

SD-366

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine constructing the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill, focusing on United States Secretary of Transportation's perspective.

SD-406

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider pending calendar nominations.

S-116

10:15 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine District Judges, focusing on exploring legislative solutions to the bipartisan problem of universal injunctions.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Native American education, focusing on Federal programs at the U.S. Department of Education.

SD-628

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, "SBA Fraud Enforcement Extension Act".

SR-428A

##### APRIL 3

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the United States European Command and United States Africa Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed hearing in SVC-217.

SD-G50

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Scott Kuper, of California, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and Eric Matthew Ueland, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget.

SD-342

##### APRIL 9

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Personnel

To hold hearings to examine personnel policies and programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-222