

CELEBRATING THE 2025 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD HONOREES AT THE WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE CELEBRATION AND AWARDS LUNCHEON IN RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. JARED MOSKOWITZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise along with my colleague, Rep. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, to celebrate and honor the incredible achievements of women who are shaping our communities, empowering future generations and leading with grace, courage, and determination. It is a privilege to recognize inspiring women receiving the 2025 Community Service Award in recognition of Women's History Month at the Women of Excellence Celebration and Awards Luncheon.

This celebration is not just about acknowledging individual accomplishments, but it is also about highlighting the collective strength and transformative influence women have in every sector of society. From family leaders to trailblazers in business, education, public service, and beyond, women continue to break barriers and inspire change with remarkable resilience and dedication.

We extend a special thank you to the host of the event, LaTonya Coley-McKenly, the Executive Director of the Deerfield Beach Housing Authority. Her vision, leadership, and commitment to community development made this celebration possible.

Mr. Speaker, please join us in celebrating the honorees being recognized at this year's Women of Excellence Celebration and Awards Luncheon in recognition of Women's History Month: Gloria J. Battle, Lisa C. Davis, Rose Anne Brown, Kiana Morris, Gwendolen Clarke-Reed, and Shaheewa F. Gelin.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Blacks In Government (BIG), which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this month. The theme of BIG's anniversary celebration is "50 Years of Transformative Government Leadership. Navigating Change, Leading the Charge."

BIG was founded in 1975 in the District of Columbia by a small group of Black employees at the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to address discrimination against Black federal employees. Over time, BIG has expanded its mission to assist and advocate for Black employees in all levels of government. BIG promotes equality and equity in government employment and creates pathways for students interested in careers in government through its scholarship programs.

I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing BIG for its contributions over the last 50 years.

RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FAIRFAX LIBRARY FOUNDATION

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Fairfax Library Foundation, an organization that has played an essential role in enhancing the programs and services of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL), the largest public library system in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Since its creation in 1994, the Foundation has operated as a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization with a singular and steadfast mission: to support FCPL in its endeavor to enrich the lives of over 1 million residents across Fairfax County.

Over the past three decades, the Fairfax Library Foundation has been instrumental in ensuring that the Fairfax County Public Library continues to provide unparalleled access to information, technology, and educational opportunities. Through its unwavering commitment to the community, the Foundation has helped fund innovative programs that enhance civic engagement, promote literacy, and ensure equitable access to essential services for all residents—regardless of their background or economic status.

With a deep commitment to supporting lifelong learning, the Foundation has been a catalyst for the library's extensive work in providing resources such as educational workshops, digital literacy programs, and tutoring services. By facilitating access to these resources, the Foundation has had a profound and lasting impact on individuals of all ages, contributing to the intellectual and personal growth of the community.

As we reflect on the Foundation's accomplishments, it is crucial to recognize the extraordinary leadership of its board members, staff, volunteers, and generous supporters. Their tireless efforts have not only enhanced the library's ability to meet the needs of the community but have also helped to make FCPL a beacon of knowledge, culture, and civic engagement. Their dedication has fostered a library system that remains a critical resource for residents, providing a safe and welcoming environment for learning, collaboration, and enrichment.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the Fairfax Library Foundation's leadership—both past and present—for their vision, commitment, and hard work. Through their efforts, they have ensured that the Fairfax County Public Library will continue to thrive and evolve in the years to come, empowering future generations of learners, thinkers, and community members. The impact of their work over the past 30 years has been immeasurable, and I am confident that the Fairfax Library Foundation will continue to inspire and serve the residents of Fairfax County for many more decades to come. I am thrilled to congratulate the foundation on its 30th anniversary as they celebrate the "Celebration of Library Joy."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the Fairfax Library Foundation's remarkable achievements and in expressing our gratitude for its continued service to the Fairfax County community.

INDIGENOUS DIPLOMACY AND ENGAGEMENT ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for my Indigenous Diplomacy and Engagement Act to ensure that our foreign affairs fully encompass and incorporate the independent interconnectedness of our world's indigenous peoples.

The estimated 476 million indigenous peoples spread across all parts of our world are bound together by a common heritage, common wisdom and common challenges that transcend often artificial lines of national sovereignty. To recognize their international status and leverage their collective knowledge, in 2007 the international community adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This common history, knowledge and approach, in such key areas as preservation of unique cultures, sustainable use of our natural resources, and advancement of health care, offers all of us not only a wealth of expertise on their own challenges but on those we all face. To better coordinate focus on indigenous peoples worldwide and engage internationally on issues important to indigenous peoples, my Indigenous Diplomacy and Engagement Act would create an Office for Indigenous Affairs at the Department of State responsible for coordinating all efforts of the federal government regarding diplomacy and engagements with international indigenous peoples. The office would be headed by a Coordinator for Indigenous Affairs, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The coordinator will be tasked with establishing a comprehensive international strategy for promoting diplomacy and engagement with indigenous peoples.

The strategy will be developed in coordination with various federal departments and agencies as well as an Advisory Commission on Indigenous Peoples established by the bill. The Commission will consist of members appointed by the Secretary of State, President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, as well as representatives from the National Congress of American Indians, Alaska Federation of Natives and Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the representative entities for the largest groups of our country's own indigenous peoples. This will help more directly link our Nation's indigenous peoples with efforts to build relationship with those in other countries.

This bill would also require our Foreign Service Officers to be trained on the history and culture of indigenous communities that reside near their posts of assignment. Our Foreign Service Officers will often be the primary American officials for interaction with these communities, and should be well versed in specific indigenous peoples' issues.

We must not step away from the international stage; rather we should lead efforts for meaningful engagement where and however we can. This includes strengthening our relationships and partnerships with international indigenous peoples to more fully include their special perspective and connectedness in an inextricably interlinked world.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join with me in passing and enacting the Indigenous Diplomacy and Engagement Act.

**HONORING THE LATE ROBERT
GEORGE CLARK, JR.**

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a trailblazer, the Honorable Robert George Clark, Jr. He dedicated his life to demonstrating what can be achieved through hard work, perseverance, and a strong desire for change.

Robert George Clark, Jr. was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1967, becoming the first African American to serve in the Mississippi State Legislature since the Reconstruction era. He remained in office until 2003, leaving behind a legacy of leadership and progress.

Clark was born on October 3, 1928, to the late Mr. Robert and Mrs. Julia Anne Clark of Ebenezer, Mississippi, as the youngest of three children. He attended Holmes County Training School in Durant, Mississippi, and later earned his B.A. from Jackson State University in 1952. In 1959, he obtained a Master's Degree in Administration and Educational Services from Michigan State University. In 1979, while serving in the Mississippi State Legislature, Clark further honed his expertise as a teaching fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

After earning his B.A. degree, Clark worked as a teacher in Holmes County. His first experience in politics came in 1966 when he ran for and won an elected board position with the Holmes County Community Action Program (CAP). The following year, he ran for state legislator on Holmes County's Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) ticket. His victory made history, as he became the first Black person elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives since Reconstruction.

Clark's election signaled the emergence of Black electoral politics in Mississippi. As late as 1964, only ten Black people were registered to vote in Holmes County, despite African Americans comprising roughly 75 percent of the population. By 1967, however, the Black community had built one of the strongest and most sophisticated political organizations in the state.

Ten years after his historic election, Clark became the first Black committee chairman in the Mississippi House of Representatives when he was appointed to lead the Education Committee. Under his leadership, the legislature passed landmark education reforms, including the 1982 Education Reform Act and the 1984 Vocational Education Reform Act. The 1982 act significantly improved Mississippi's educational system by modernizing classrooms and other facilities, replacing outdated textbooks, and securing new school buses.

In January 1992, Clark was elected Speaker Pro Tempore, a position he held until 2000. By the time he retired from the Mississippi House of Representatives in December 2003, he was the longest-serving member in continuous House service. I stand on the shoulders of

men like him, drawing inspiration from his tireless efforts to make Mississippi a better place for all its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the late Robert George Clark, Jr. for his unwavering dedication to civil rights and racial equality.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on Monday, March 24, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 73, and YEA on Roll Call No. 72.

**DEFENDING EDUCATION TRANS-
PARENCY AND ENDING ROGUE
REGIMES ENGAGING IN NEFAR-
IOUS TRANSACTIONS ACT**

SPEECH OF

HON. NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Chair, I oppose H.R. 1048, the DETERRENT Act, because it imposes unnecessary, overly broad reporting mandates on universities under the pretense of national security. While protecting research from foreign influence is important, this bill goes too far, sweeping in respected organizations like the United Nations and the World Health Organization. It creates a complex and punitive reporting system that burdens universities with vague requirements and excessive penalties, while assigning enforcement to the Department of Education, which is understaffed and lacks national security expertise. The Trump Administration is also trying to dismantle the Department of Education.

The bill also mandates a public database of faculty contracts and donations, raising privacy concerns and exposing researchers to potential harassment. This approach does not strengthen security—it creates red tape that harms academic collaboration. That is why I oppose it, along with major higher education groups and research institutions.

HONORING COLE MCGOWAN

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Cole McGowan for his dedicated service and exemplary leadership as a firefighter with the Yocha Dehe Fire Department. Mr. McGowan has been named the Yocha Dehe Firefighter of the Year, a recognition awarded by his peers for his commitment, work ethic, and embodiment of the department's core values.

Born in Newport Beach, California, Mr. McGowan currently resides in Rescue, California with his wife Brenna. Together, they are

the proud parents of three children: Jack, Kate, and Jane. In addition to his outstanding service as a firefighter, Mr. McGowan is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, where he served from 1993 to 1997, reaching the rank of Sergeant E-5. His military service reflects his lifelong commitment to serving and protecting others.

From his first day with the Yocha Dehe Fire Department, Mr. McGowan has demonstrated unwavering dedication to protecting our community. As a member of the only internationally accredited Native American fire department, he plays a vital role in providing essential fire protection, rescue support, and paramedic services to Yolo County. Additionally, Mr. McGowan has devoted time to improving the station and their training sites, as well as teaching at the Youth Fire Academy, inspiring our community's next generation of firefighters to answer the call to serve.

Mr. McGowan's dedication to our community extends beyond his professional responsibilities. In the past, he has volunteered his time to support youth development programs at the El Dorado County Juvenile Hall and Lords Gym in El Dorado County. Through these efforts, he helps to mentor and empower the youth in our community.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cole McGowan exemplifies the ideals of public service and community dedication. His commitment to excellence, both in his professional duties and community involvement, makes him a deserving recipient of the 2025 Firefighter of the Year Award at Yocha Dehe Fire Department. It is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

**RECOGNIZING DEPUTY JEFF
LARKIN**

HON. VICTORIA SPARTZ

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Mrs. SPARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hamilton County Sheriff Deputy Jeff Larkin, who is retiring after 16 years of service with the Hamilton County, Indiana Sheriff's Department.

Prior to his time with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Larkin served as a police officer with the Memphis, Tennessee Police Department. In 1982, he served as lead negotiator for a hostage situation at St. Jude Children's Hospital. After his heroic actions during this event, Deputy Larkin formed a new negotiation unit with the Memphis Police Department. Deputy Larkin's actions during the hostage situation also had a profound impact on the 1985 Tennessee vs. Garner court case, which stated "Under the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, a police officer may use deadly force to prevent the escape of a fleeing suspect only if the officer has a good-faith belief that the suspect poses a significant threat of death or serious physical injury to the officer or others."

During his time with the Sheriff's Department, Deputy Larkin received a number of awards, including being named "Reserve Deputy of the Year." Deputy Larkin has also been honored for his work with senior citizens in the community providing them with information on Senior Crime Prevention and Elder Fraud & Abuse.