

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTH LAKE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of the South Lake Fire Protection District of Lake County, and to recognize this organization's unwavering dedication to protecting and serving its community. Over the past century, the South Lake Fire Protection District has been a model for public service and emergency response management.

The South Lake Fire Protection District was founded in 1925, following a devastating fire in our area in 1918. In the years since, the District has expanded the land under its protection and now serves a diverse area encompassing over 290 square miles in Lake County. Around 12,000 people are served by the District, including residents of the unincorporated territories of Loch Lomond, Adam Springs, Hobergs, Cobb, Whispering Pines, Anderson Springs, Middletown, Middletown Rancheria, Hidden Valley Lake, Hidden Valley Ranchos, Noble Ranch and the ancestral lands of the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians. The South Lake Fire Protection District has increased the resilience of these smaller areas by creating a strong community of mutual aid that allows first responders to cross boundaries to provide assistance. Every year, the District plays a key role in responding to fires across Lake County and the state of California.

In 2015, the South Lake Fire Protection District faced one of its most significant fires to date, the Valley Fire. This fire burned 76,000 acres and destroyed over 1,995 structures, making it the third most destructive fire in state history. Four firefighters were critically injured fighting this blaze, and tragically, four lives were lost. The District was on the front lines of this fast-moving fire, fighting to protect people and structures. During this time, the firefighters of the South Lake Fire Protection District embodied their organization's mission statement to minimize injuries, fatalities, and property losses through efficient and effective fire suppression and prevention. The firefighters of the District displayed extraordinary courage and unwavering resolve during the Valley Fire, and we recognize and thank them for their essential efforts to contain this fire.

Mr. Speaker, it is both fitting and proper that we recognize the 100th anniversary of the South Lake Fire Protection District today. Over the past century, the first responders of this organization have exemplified the ideals of public service, putting their lives on the line to protect their communities from emergencies. Their courage and dedication serve as a model for us all, and we honor them here today.

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, or the SAVE Act, which does nothing to protect voting rights.

House Republicans are advancing a bill that would disenfranchise millions of women and other Americans through a federal takeover of state election administration that makes it harder to vote. Sixty-nine million American women—one out of four Americans would face an additional burden to register to vote simply because they changed their last name after marriage. Simply put, this Republican bill is about voter suppression.

In 2012, Minnesotans rightly rejected a state constitutional amendment that would have imposed voter ID requirements. Each election, Minnesotans turn out at the highest levels in the nation to participate in elections that are free, fair, and secure.

Under the guise of election integrity, the Republicans' H.R. 22 would require Minnesotans and every American to provide burdensome "documentary proof of citizenship"—similar to what Minnesotans already rejected—in order to participate in federal elections. Standard REAL IDs, Tribal IDs and military IDs alone do not meet this bill's extreme criteria. Married women or others whose name doesn't match their birth certificate would be required to present a passport with their current name to prove their identity and citizenship. In states like Minnesota with same-day registration, all new registrants, and those updating their registration as the result of a move or a name change, would be mandated to present their birth certificate and matching ID or a passport at the polls in order to vote.

Nearly half of Minnesotans don't have a passport, meaning millions of voters would need to obtain one. Collectively, Minnesotans could be forced to spend over \$320 million dollars, with passport applications costing more than \$130 each and taking weeks for processing. Republicans have essentially mandated a poll tax to access the fundamental right to vote.

Congress should be following Minnesota's lead and working to make it easier for Americans to vote, not putting up roadblocks. Congress should pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act that would reinstate many of the protections in the Civil Rights Act of 1965 that were undercut by the Supreme Court in their *Shelby County v. Holder* decision in 2013. The bill would expand automatic voter registration and allows for same day voter registration and protects against race-based discrimination at the ballot box. The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act passed the House in 2021, but House Repub-

licans have continued to refuse to bring the bill to the House Floor for a vote.

Again, I oppose H.R. 22, the Republican SAVE Act, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting NO.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF TIM PENNY

HON. BRAD FINSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Tim Penny, a friend and leader in southern Minnesota who is retiring from eighteen years as President/CEO of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

Tim Penny first stepped into public service forty-nine years ago when he was elected to the Minnesota State Senate in his twenties. From there, he would go on to serve in this very chamber as the U.S. Representative for southeastern Minnesota, part of the district that I'm proud to represent today.

Whether in or out of elected office, Tim has been a fixture in our state for decades, fiercely advocating for the region's economic growth, rural development, and community revitalization.

In his nearly twenty years leading SMIF, the organization has launched several grant projects, educational programs, and community improvement initiatives.

His departure leaves behind enormous shoes to fill, but also a legacy of service that will long be remembered by all of us in southern Minnesota.

Congratulations to Tim on his well-deserved retirement, and wishing him and Sandy the best in this next chapter.

HONORING CLEARLAKE ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Clear Lake Environmental Research Center (CLERC), whom I have named the California 4th District's Climate Crisis Champion of the Year for Lake County for their outstanding leadership in advancing environmental resilience, wildfire prevention, and climate action in our area.

Founded in 2014 by the natural resource managers for the County of Lake at the time, Will Evans and Carolyn Ruttan, CLERC was created out of a shared recognition that Lake County needed dedicated environmental research and action to protect its future. CLERC in the past eleven years has expanded immensely, bringing together a team of over a dozen professionals with expertise in ecology,

• 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.

fire science, conservation biology, water resource management, and more.

Together, this multidisciplinary team has transformed Lake County's approach to environmental stewardship. At its core, CLERC's work is collaborative. They have partnered with government agencies, academic institutions, conservation coalitions, and community groups to develop and implement projects rooted in science, sustainability, and equity.

One of CLERC's most significant contributions to our community has been its leadership in wildfire prevention and climate resilience. Through the strategic execution of projects outlined in our Lake County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, CLERC has completed thousands of acres of fuel reduction and fire mitigation work. These efforts have not only reduced the risk of catastrophic wildfires but have directly prevented at least four potential fire disasters in just the past year alone, safeguarding homes, businesses, and vital natural landscapes in our county.

In addition to wildfire mitigation, CLERC has expanded its reach through the creation of Lake County's only California-certified environmental laboratory, enabling water quality monitoring and scientific research to support ecosystem restoration in our area. Their projects have protected native species, preserved biodiversity, and restored degraded habitats, all while creating job opportunities and workforce development programs in environmental restoration for our local community.

CLERC has also taken an active role in public policy and regional leadership. The organization serves as a member of the Lake County Community Risk Reduction Authority, participates in state and federal environmental policy advisory groups, and contributes to conservation strategy through regional coalitions. Through this, CLERC has become a leading advocate for sustainable land and water management in our community.

Mr. Speaker, CLERC exemplifies the best of what community-driven, science-based environmental action can achieve. Their innovation, collaboration, and commitment to environmental resilience have earned them well-deserved recognition in California and beyond. Therefore, it is fitting that we honor them here today as Lake County's 2025 Climate Crisis Champion.

COMMEMORATING CAMBODIAN
GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

HON. LORI TRAHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solemn remembrance of one of the darkest chapters in modern history—the Cambodian genocide. On this day, April 17th, we mark the 50th anniversary of the Khmer Rouge's rise to power, a tragic turning point that ushered in a period of unimaginable suffering for the Cambodian people from 1975 to 1979. We remember this anniversary not only to mourn the innocent lives lost, but to honor the strength of those who survived, and to reaffirm our collective commitment to ensuring that such atrocities are never repeated.

Under the brutal regime of the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, Cambodia was trans-

formed into a nation-sized prison camp. The regime waged war on its own people, targeting those deemed enemies of the state—intellectuals, religious leaders, ethnic minorities, and anyone who dared to dissent. Families were torn apart. The vulnerable—the young, the elderly, the sick—were left to perish in what came to be known as the Killing Fields, whose soil still bears witness to the horrors inflicted there.

In just four years, more than 1.7 million lives, nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population, perished through mass executions, forced labor, starvation, and disease. The Khmer Rouge didn't just seek to kill individuals. They sought to erase a culture, a history, a sense of self. What was left behind was a shattered society struggling to pick up the pieces.

Yet, amid such overwhelming grief and loss, there is a story of extraordinary resilience. The survivors of the genocide embody a strength and resolve that defy comprehension. Despite enduring horrors beyond words, they rebuilt their lives and committed themselves to preserving the memory of those who were lost. Many have bravely shared their stories—passing them down to future generations so that the full weight of this tragedy is never forgotten, and its lessons are never ignored.

Today, on Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day, we not only mourn the millions of lives taken, but we stand in solidarity with the families who were shattered and the culture that was nearly destroyed. We recognize the unwavering courage of the survivors, whose voices compel us to remember that remembrance is not merely an act of reflection—it is a solemn pledge to ensure that such atrocities never happen again.

May we never forget the lessons of this dark history. And may we stand united in our commitment to peace, to justice, and to the protection of human rights everywhere. It is on all of us to ensure that the pain of the Cambodian people is never erased, and that the memory of the victims continues to guide us toward a world where such horror is never repeated.

We mourn not only for what was taken, but for the indomitable spirit of the Cambodian people—who faced unspeakable cruelty with unimaginable resilience. And we stand in awe of the courage of those who survived to bear witness—because remembrance is not just a tribute to the past, but a vow to safeguard the future.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S PROPOSED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SHUTDOWN

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud member of the Congressional Black Caucus because our children are our future—and the Department of Education is one of the strongest tools we have to prepare them for that future.

In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* affirmed what Black America had long known: separate is not equal. That landmark decision was more than a legal ruling—it was a promise. A promise that every child, no matter their

ZIP code, deserves a fair and quality education.

Since then, the Department of Education has helped to keep that promise. It protects students from racial and gender discrimination and enforces critical civil rights laws. It supports Pell Grants and other forms of student aid, strengthens our Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and ensures that students with disabilities receive the services they need to succeed.

But now, President Trump wants to destroy all of that. Eliminating the Department of Education is not about policy—it is about punishment. And I want to go on the record: we will fight back—against President Trump, against you, Speaker JOHNSON, and against every Republican who remains silent in the face of this attack.

This is punishment for being poor. For being Black. For attending public schools.

A report from UCLA's Civil Rights Project reveals that 40 percent of Black students attend schools where 90 percent or more of their classmates are also students of color. These schools too often have fewer counselors, overcrowded classrooms, and outdated materials. When you cut the Department of Education, you don't just cut red tape—you cut protections. You cut resources. You cut off opportunities.

And while this assault affects communities across the country, it hits especially hard in my district—Ohio's Third. We stand to lose \$109 million per year in basic public school funding that keeps students learning and teachers employed. We also stand to lose \$21 million in special education support, and \$19 million for school meals—because no child should be too hungry to learn. More than 1,300 teaching jobs are on the line.

All of this—to make billionaires richer? Mr. Speaker, we are not going backward. Not to Jim Crow classrooms. Not to separate and unequal.

The Congressional Black Caucus stands united. We will fight for our students. For our schools. And for the future every child deserves.

RECOGNIZING THE HEROIC AC-
TIONS OF MR. DANNY WELLS OF
PECULIAR, MO

HON. MARK ALFORD

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a heroic resident of Missouri's Fourth Congressional District, Mr. Danny Wells.

Mr. Wells is a team leader for the public works department in the city of Peculiar. Earlier this year, middle Missouri was in the grips of a historic cold front with temperatures well below freezing and wind chills regularly hovering in the single digits.

On January 24th, with the temperature in the twenties, Danny was driving down State Highway YY. Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a young child in a ditch—barely clothed and shivering in the cold. Mr. Wells jumped into action. After searching for any adults nearby, he pulled over and literally gave the boy the coat off his back and the hat off