

Elected to the South Carolina House of representatives in 2006, Reverend Hodges served until 2016. He introduced the bill naming the Combahee River crossing the "Harriet Tubman Bridge," led the creation of the SC Microenterprise Development Act, and chaired multiple legislative subcommittees. His work consistently reflected a commitment to empowerment, equity, and cultural preservation.

Reverend Hodges was a devoted husband to Patricia A. Few and a proud father to three daughters—Kendra, Kenya, and Kenithea. Through faith, public service, and the arts, he uplifted generations and preserved the stories of his people with grace and purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in recognizing and honoring the extraordinary life of Reverend Kenneth F. Hodges. He was more than a leader; he was a vessel of faith, a preserver of culture, and a voice for those who too often go unheard, and to me—a personal friend. South Carolina is richer for his service. May his memory inspire us to serve with the same humility, passion, and purpose that defined his life.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. BECCA BALINT

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Ms. BALINT. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present on April 29, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 109, and NAY on Roll Call No. 110.

#### HONORING PRIVATE JAMES "STANLEY" MITCHELL

#### HON. DOUG LAMALFA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a great American hero, Private James "Stanley" Mitchell, who volunteered to serve our great Nation in World War II and died 82 years ago in a Japanese POW camp in Luzon, Philippines. Private Mitchell's remains were located and identified and have been returned to his family, a testament of his courage and sacrifice.

Private Mitchell was born in Joplin, Missouri on October 2, 1917. The family would move frequently during his early life, eventually settling down in Hamilton City, California.

On March 4, 1941, Private Mitchell enlisted in the United States Army and was deployed as part of the 31st Infantry Regiment on assignment to Clark Field in Luzon, Philippines. Ten months after his initial deployment to the Philippines, Imperial Japanese Forces would bomb Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States and all her territories into World War II. Japanese forces begin a full-scale invasion of Luzon, Philippines on December 22, 1941. The 31st Infantry Regiment stood defiant and courageous against overwhelming Japanese forces until their surrender on April 9, 1942.

Private Mitchell joined approximately 72,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war (POW) on a 65-mile march known as the Bataan Death March. These brave souls endured tor-

ture, starvation, disease and ultimately death at the hands of the Japanese forces. By the end of the march, only approximately 52,000 American and Filipino POWs remained alive.

Private Mitchell and many surviving POWs would be held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp. Conditions would not improve for these courageous men. On January 7, 1943, Private Mitchell succumbed to starvation and disease, dying at a weight of only 70 pounds. Private Mitchell was buried in one of the many mass graves at the camp.

The Cabanatuan POW Camp would be liberated on January 30, 1945, with only 489 POWs remaining alive. Unfortunately, 2,656 brave American POWs had lost their lives at the camp.

Private Mitchell was the first World War II casualty from Hamilton City. His status as a POW brought great sadness and pain to his family. The news of his death brought devastation to his parents and family. His remains were exhumed and identified in September of 2024. Private Mitchell's remains were brought home to the United States on May 3, 2025, and he will be laid to rest between his parents at the Los Molinos Cemetery, in Northern California.

Private Mitchell's story and sacrifice will not be forgotten. His legacy and impact to our community will continue to be felt. His return will bring closure to his family. God bless Private Mitchell and welcome home.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF SAIGON

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.

April 30, 2025, marks 50 years since the pivotal moment that signaled both the end of the Vietnam War and the beginning of a new chapter for millions of Vietnamese refugees—many of whom have made extraordinary contributions to communities across the United States, particularly in Northern Virginia.

On April 30, 1975, the world watched as the city of Saigon fell. For many, it marked a day of loss, of country, of family, and of home. Yet it also marked the beginning of a remarkable story of resilience, strength, and hope.

In the years that followed, hundreds of thousands fled Vietnam in search of liberty and opportunity, many finding a new beginning here in the United States.

Northern Virginia is home to one of the largest and most vibrant Vietnamese American communities in the country.

Places like the Eden Center stand as a testament of the rich cultural heritage and entrepreneurial spirit.

The businesses, traditions, and values the Vietnamese American community upholds continue to enrich our region and make invaluable contributions.

The Vietnamese American community's story is one of perseverance, courage, and hope. Their contributions have made our communities stronger and better.

Their journey embodies the ideals we hold dear: perseverance through hardship, strength

in adversity, and an enduring hope for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this history, paying tribute to the lives lost and forever changed, and reaffirming our commitment to the universal values of freedom, democracy, and human dignity.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. DEREK TRAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Mr. TRAN. Mr. Speaker, when attempting to cast my vote on April 29, 2025 for S. 146—the TAKE IT DOWN Act, my voting card did not properly record my vote. Had my voting card been functioning properly, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 104.

#### RECOGNIZING VICTORIA MORTON, GOLD AWARD

#### HON. W. GREGORY STEUBE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Mr. STEUBE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Victoria Morton. Victoria is a member of Girl Scouts of Gulf Coast Florida, Troop 135, and has exemplified extraordinary leadership, innovative problem-solving, and a demonstrated commitment to making a lasting, positive impact, by earning the most prestigious award in Girl Scouting, the Gold Award.

Gold Award Girl Scouts are recognized as trailblazers who are willing to tackle the most pressing challenges facing their communities and the world with measurable, sustainable, and far-reaching results. To earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, high school-age Girl Scouts must identify and investigate an issue they care about, devise a plan, and then lead a team of experts and community members to implement a project that produces lasting change. Over the course of 1–2 years, Gold Award Girl Scouts demonstrate significant initiative, commitment, and leadership, distinguishing them from their peers. Through their resourcefulness and perseverance, they embody the Girl Scout Law to truly make the world a better place.

Victoria's project, "Pet Resource Central," in partnership with the Community Resource Center of Punta Gorda, the Harry Chapin Food Bank, the Animal Welfare League, the Suncoast Humane Society, and peers at Port Charlotte High School, was an excellent endeavor to address food insecurity and animal welfare in our community by creating a pantry for low-income pet owners. She collected donations to stock the pantry and hosted free workshops on affordable pet care. Additionally, Victoria provided free grooming services, including ear and teeth cleaning, nail trimming, and created a resource booklet with spay and neuter information. Victoria dedicated 136 hours to her project, which will have a lasting and positive impact on the community for years to come.

On behalf of the 17th Congressional District of Florida, congratulations to Victoria Morton

for achieving the highest distinction in Girl Scouts, the Gold Award. We thank Victoria for her leadership and making such a positive, lasting change in our community.

CONGRATULATING LINDA LARSON  
ON HER GRADUATION FROM  
INVER HILLS COMMUNITY COL-  
LEGE

**HON. ANGIE CRAIG**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Linda Larson on fulfilling her lifelong dream of completing her college education. Linda graduated with an Associate's Degree with an emphasis on political science from Inver Hills Community College. She also graduated as part of Phi Beta Kappa.

Linda grew up on a small farm near Ruthton, Minnesota. As the daughter of a tenant farmer, Linda learned early on the challenges and instability farmers face in trying to earn a living. This informed her work at the Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), where she has advocated for affordable healthcare and the needs of family farmers. Additionally, Linda has been a strong leader for women in farming. In 2013, she helped reestablish the MFU Women's Conference and later received the 2013 MFU Leadership Excellence award along with her husband, Brian. She is the current president of the Dakota County Farmers Union and regularly attends Farmers Union events at the local, state and national level.

I know Linda through her work on my Farmers Advisory Council, which she has been a member of since I came to Congress in 2019. Linda has provided invaluable feedback to my work on agriculture policy as I've fought to ensure family farmers have a strong farm safety net. I look forward to our continued collaboration to pass a bipartisan farm bill.

I congratulate Linda on her graduation and thank her for her service to our community.

RECOGNIZING GOLD AWARD GIRL  
SCOUT RECIPIENTS

**HON. SCOTT FITZGERALD**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating several remarkable Girl Scouts from Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District for demonstrating leadership, creativity, and a commitment to making a lasting impact by earning the most prestigious award in Girl Scouting, the Gold Award.

Gold Award Girl Scouts help their communities and the world by identifying a community need, investigating it, devising a plan, and leading a team of experts and community members to implement a project that produces lasting change. Over the course of 1 to 2 years, Gold Award Girl Scouts demonstrate significant initiative, commitment, and leader-

ship, distinguishing them from their peers. Through their resourcefulness and perseverance, they embody the Girl Scout Law to make the world a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to the following outstanding young women:

Ayla Abraham, Troop 6249  
Sophia Ayer, Troop 8017  
Angela Brandes, Troop 4796  
Mia Bremner, Individually Registered Member  
Madeline Bruss, Troop 8329  
Abigail Connett, Troop 4801  
Anissa Griffith, Troop 4633  
Alexandra Higbee, Troop 4569  
Jenna Jegl, Troop 6239  
Rayna Jellish, Troop 9300  
Katelyn Kosfeld, Troop 8093  
Gracie Lochowicz, Troop 4801  
Tatiana Mamalakos, Troop 8004  
Sarah Marcheske, Troop 8329  
Lauren Munson, Troop 4796  
Zoe Peterson, Troop 8017  
Kylie Rich, Troop 4801  
Megan Schatz, Troop 4679  
Skylar Smith, Troop 4333  
Samantha Sroka, Troop 8093  
Sydney Vande Hei, Troop 4582  
Sydney Zarske, Troop 8004  
Eleanor Zgonc, Troop 8004

Mr. Speaker, I commend these Girl Scouts on their incredible accomplishment, and thank them for all the work they have done in service of communities across Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District.

INDIA-U.S. DEAL SIGNALS ENERGY  
SOVEREIGNTY

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2025*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week, Vice President J.D. VANCE with his Indian-American wife Usha, achieved a global recalibration for energy independence meeting with America's appreciated ally Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It is an extraordinary recognition of the positive impact of Indian-Americans that the Second Lady of America is an Indian-American herself.

American partnership has never been more important with the world's oldest democracy allied with the world's largest democracy.

An excellent analysis of this energy achievement was provided in the daily Threat Status newsletter from The Washington Times on April 28, 2025, by Vijay Jayaraj of the CO2 Coalition in Fairfax, Virginia:

OPINION

In a landmark move that may well redefine the future of U.S.-India trade relations and global energy geopolitics, Vice President J.D. Vance announced a new trade deal with India. The day after he met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 21, Mr. Vance said the two countries had "officially finalized the terms of reference for the trade negotiation."

The deal, initiated against the backdrop of President Trump's tariff threats, could be a masterstroke of economic diplomacy. Mr. Trump's announcement of a 90-day pause on

reciprocal tariffs, which could have raised duties on Indian exports, gave India a window to negotiate.

The energy economics of this deal and its potential to reshape the global market for fossil fuels are fascinating. In his announcement, Mr. Vance declared, "We want to sell more energy to India and also help it explore its resources, including offshore natural gas reserves and critical mineral supplies."

The arrangement could propel India toward its long-standing goal of energy surplus. This feat appeared daunting, perhaps impossible, against the nation's projections for a massive increase in demand, the fastest-growing among major economies for the next two decades.

Let's get it straight: India has a long way to go before it even contemplates reducing its consumption of hydrocarbons. Even a middle-class Indian like me residing in a major city experiences power blackouts regularly, which is precisely why the nation has postponed net-zero ambitions to a distant 2070. Even the documents for the country's participation in the nutty United Nations Paris Agreement prioritize domestic energy security over international climate diplomacy.

India's reliance on imported energy, which includes more than 85% of its crude oil and roughly 50% of its natural gas, poses a strategic vulnerability. The government aims to more than double natural gas' share of the energy mix to 15% by 2030. U.S. liquefied natural gas suppliers have surpassed the United Arab Emirates to become India's second-largest LNG supplier, trailing only Qatar.

A key player in this unfolding saga is GAIL Ltd., India's state-owned natural gas company. On April 11, GAIL issued a tender to procure 1 million metric tons per annum of LNG from an existing or new U.S. LNG liquefaction project, with operations commencing by 2030. The agreement, potentially extendable by five to 10 years, signals India's commitment to U.S. supplies.

GAIL had to stall a similar process in 2023 to buy a stake in a U.S. LNG plant after President Biden banned export permits for LNG projects. The ban was lifted only after the Trump administration returned to the White House.

The timing of the upcoming deal is notable, strengthening India's position as a counterweight to China. The Quad alliance—comprising the U.S., India, Japan and Australia—gains heft as India bolsters its energy security and economic clout.

As Mr. Vance emphasized, the U.S. willingness to share technology and expertise could enhance Indian autonomy, reducing reliance on adversarial suppliers. This alignment is particularly crucial as China intensifies its trade outreach in Southeast Asia and seeks to blunt the effect of U.S. tariffs.

The Western media will decry the expansion of fossil fuel trading as a climate catastrophe, as though that would resonate with a serious person. The U.S.-India deal wisely eschews climate moralizing and embraces a symbiotic truth: America's shale boom and India's hunger for energy perfectly match.

This deal reaffirms energy sovereignty. Perhaps it marks the beginning of a global recalibration, in which nations rediscover the courage to assert their right to energy abundance and economic self-determination without apologizing to the corrupt and decrepit climate cartel of Brussels, Davos and U.N. corridors.

May the new world order feature developing nations standing for their futures and rejecting the false campaign of planetary salvation.