

with the International Space Station are lighting the way for future scientists, engineers, and astronauts.

As we celebrate National Space Day, we must also remain vigilant in protecting NASA's crucial programs and funding. Any significant cuts to NASA's science funding would not only impact our space economy and workforce but could threaten our national security and technological leadership position. We must maintain America's preeminence in space.

I encourage all Americans to reflect on how space exploration shapes our lives and futures. I'm proud of our district's contributions to this great endeavor, and I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING JENNIFER MANKOTYA

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 5, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Ms. Jennifer Mankotya has made to our community in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton. In addition to providing countless hours of direct support to neighbors and flood victims, she helped coordinate the collection and distribution of emergency supplies, meals and donated services to help those who needed help. A truly selfless leader, Ms. Mankotya was a strong advocate for bringing in government and non-profit resources to aid in the recovery process.

It is clear that Jennifer Mankotya has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service. May we all strive to serve our communities with the same dedication and humility.

HONORING BOB WESLEY FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO CENTRAL FLORIDA

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 5, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Bob Wesley was born in Marietta, Georgia, in 1953 to Martha "Pete" Wesley and Frank Wesley. Bob was the middle son among six siblings and was always different and quick-witted.

As a child who stood head and shoulders above other kindergartners, he immediately befriended the shortest kid in class. He convinced his brothers to play pranks on their mother, once taping over the speaker inside her phone, prompting a repairman visit and an eye roll from her. But while someone who didn't know him saw a goofy, funny jokester, he also showed an adult-like interest in government and protecting the rights of others.

He was stubborn. Rather than following the rules and cutting his long hair, Bob dropped out of Lakeland High School and enrolled in night school instead. He became a photographer and, for a short time, a traveling mechanic with a drag race funny car team, the Houston Hustler.

He then attended Polk County Community College and received his bachelor's in history at the University of West Florida. Bob found his passion when he pursued his interest in the law, freedom, and justice at Florida State University College of Law. He was then admitted to the Florida Bar and became a board-certified trial attorney. He eventually settled down in Orlando.

After decades as a successful defense attorney, Bob was elected as a Democrat for the Office of the Public Defender of Orange and Osceola counties in 2001. He was elected by the people and served in this role for 24 years, retiring in January of 2025. During his tenure as a public defender, Bob partnered with the community to help make justice equitable for all, regardless of race, status, or socioeconomic status. This was his legacy.

He gained national attention for his work to ensure professional clothing for his clients, those accused of crimes, those facing involuntary commitment for mental health and addiction, and children who appeared in delinquency cases. Bob hosted an annual clothing drive where he would greet people with smiles and jokes as they dropped off their clothes to be worn in court by his clients. He also created a community bail fund to help those without resources pay bail and be released from jail while awaiting trial.

Bob was an outspoken advocate against police profiling and harsher sentences for Black and brown people. He lobbied aggressively to reduce time behind bars for low-level, first-time offenders, fought for civil citations over arrests, and brought attention to issues with evidence handling and arrests of children in his circuit.

ISRAEL AT 77

HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 5, 2025

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD remarks submitted at the request of a Virginia Beach constituent, Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman of Temple Lev Tikvah, and are a reflection of his views:

Israel At 77—How poignant to affirm the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel, two close democratic allies, in our own Hampton Roads and Commonwealth of Virginia! Hampton Roads' military might is ever ready to stand by beleaguered Israel. Early in the Gaza War, the USS *Abraham Lincoln* aircraft carrier, where I had lectured on Holocaust Lessons, rushed to the Mediterranean to deter Israel's Iran led enemies. Currently the USS *Harry Truman* aircraft carrier is there hitting Yemen's Houthis who hit Israel. Uniquely, The Virginia Israel Advisory Board (VIAB) established in 1996, a Virginia government agency, advises the Governor on promoting economic, cultural and educational ties with Israel. Israel's 77th anniversary takes place in the long and dark shadow of the transforming events of October 7, 2023, continuing to impact the survival and meaning of the Jewish state from within and without. All those seeking searing reflection should turn to an essential book of blood, pain and love. Amir Tibon gifted Israeli author and noted journalist's recent *The Gates of Gaza (A Story of Betrayal, Survival, and Hope In Israel's Borderlands)*, Little, Brown and Company. 2024 is bound to be a classic.

This literary masterpiece offers eye-witness report from that "Black Sabbath" with its shocking Holocaust images, continuing to shake up the State of Israel, the Middle East and beyond. Tibon, his wife and two very young daughters survived a harrowing nightmare in their home's safe room in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, the closest Israeli community to Gaza. On that day, that will also live in infamy, they were terrorized in darkness and very small quarters till liberated by Amir's father, Noam, a retired Israeli general, who rushed with his wife from Tel Aviv to save their family. Both Amir and Noam were invited to share with then President Biden when he arrived in Israel on October 17. Both father and son firmly requested the release of barbarically treated 251 hostages, including American citizens. Captives' redemption is a top Jewish commandment and an honored Israeli tradition. Saving the remaining hostages is paramount! The author's angst is with the Nazi-like Hamas leaders as well as Prime Minister Netanyahu and his government for the colossal failure to forestall the October 7 debacle, requiring a state inquiry commission. A disturbing inclusion is the eulogy by the late Moshe Dayan, the iconic Israeli leader who back in April 30, 1956, spoke at Nahal Oz's first funeral. Dayan, initially arriving the day before for planned four weddings only to face the brutal murder of Roi Rutberg, Nahal Oz's security chief, by infiltrating Gazans. Dayan's stirring words created a stir in the young community for its pessimistic message relevant years later for the October 7 much larger calamity, raising troubling questions about a peaceful future. "Have we forgotten that this group of young people dwelling at Nahal Oz is bearing the heavy gates of Gaza on its shoulders? Beyond the furrow of the border, a sea of hatred and desire for revenge is swelling awaiting the day when serenity will dull our path . . . This is our life's choice: to be prepared and armed, strong and determined, lest the sword be stricken from our fist and our lives cut down"

Yet, unsettling as the current scenario is we are duty-bound at this significant 77th celebration of an Israel reborn representing 4,000 years of Jewish experience and persistence, to keep a balanced perspective. Israel's monumental accomplishments and gained substantial power—though still vulnerable—since its fragile 1948 establishment in the Holocaust's consuming shadow are promising. However, its internal conflicting core issues demand resolution and reconciliation to guarantee a robust democracy in a pluralistic Jewish context, eschewing both secular authoritarianism and oppressive theocracy. Otherwise, the gates of Gaza (the book's title) that biblical Samson carried facing the threatening Philistines, would now prove too heavy for heroic Israel at multi front war!

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is founder of Temple Lev Tikvah in Virginia Beach. He was born in Chu, Kazakhstan (USSR) to Polish Holocaust survivors who had met in Siberia. He spent his early childhood in Poland, Austria and Germany before moving to Israel in 1949.

RECOGNIZING COAST GUARD AUXILIARY CLEARWATER FLOTILLA 11-1'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 5, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coast Guard Auxiliary Clearwater

Flotilla 11-1's 75th Anniversary. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary was established by Congress to support the Coast Guard with its boat safety mission. Clearwater Flotilla 11-1's service to the Clearwater area predates the Coast Guard's presence in the city. Today, though, the auxiliary provides direct and continuing support to Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater and to Coast Guard Station Sand Key. This June, the Clearwater Chapter, Flotilla 11-1, celebrates its 75th anniversary of service to the boating public throughout the Tampa Bay area. The Coast Guard Auxiliary and Flotilla 11-1 provide invaluable support to the active-duty Coast Guard through a variety of non-law enforcement programs. These include search and rescue missions, marine environmental patrols, youth programs, public education and safety patrols. Additionally, their missions include search and rescue "call outs", back up marine radio coverage and near short patrols as part of the America's Waterway Watch Program. As the Coast Guard's homeland and national security responsibilities continue to expand, the men and women of the auxiliary have stepped up to increase their port security patrols to provide for the defense of our Nation's and in our case Florida's coastline and waterways.

Last year, the Flotilla 11-1 volunteered more than 9,100 hours in support of the Coast Guard. The group conducted ten boating safety education classes with more than 200 graduates, including over 100 children ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade. The group also performed almost 150 Vessel Safety Checks to ensure recreational boaters have all the safety gear they need to be legal and safe and conducted more than 175 Recreational Boating Safety Program Visits to boat equipment stores, marinas, and harbors to improve public safety. Flotilla 11-1 Clearwater operates under the leadership of Karen Miller, Commander, and Betsy Scott, Vice-Commander. The Flotilla 11-1's officers include: Jeff Otto—Communication Services, Debbie Mallorie—Finance, Steve Bushnell-Fowler—Human Resources, Karen Miller—Information Services, Public Affairs, and Public Education, Joe Garisto—Materials, Mavrick Putnam—Marine Safety and Environmental Protection, Lisa Repetto—Publications and Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitations, Gerard Gaudry—Navigation Systems, Tim Dolan—Operations and Rescue and Survival Systems, Mark Kolupa—Secretary/Records, and Andre Skoinezny—Vessel Examinations. It is my hope that my colleagues will join me in thanking the men and women of Clearwater Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 11-1 for their 75 years of service to our community and for a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO VALERIE NELSON

HON. MARK B. MESSMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 5, 2025

Mr. MESSMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Valerie Nelson, who today marks 20 years of selfless service in the United States House of Representatives. Her unwavering commitment to public service has not only benefited this institution, but it has set an example for generations of congressional staff to come.

Val first entered federal service as an executive assistant to her home state Congressman Jim Ramstad of Minnesota, serving in his Washington D.C. office to support his legislative efforts. She later joined the leadership office of Congressman Eric Cantor where she served as Member Services Director. In this position, Valerie served as a vital link between the Republican Conference and the Whip's office. When Congressman Cantor became Majority Leader, Val continued in this key role during a critical time in our conference's history.

Upon his retirement, Val stepped away from Capitol Hill for a well-deserved break and time in the private sector but in 2021, Val was recruited back to the Hill to serve as Communications Director for Appropriations Chairwoman Kay Granger.

In that role, Val was instrumental in supporting the Chairwoman's priorities by ensuring they were clearly and effectively communicated. She worked closely with Chairwoman Granger, committee staff and senior personal office staff to help shape messaging and communicate key initiatives to both the broader public and the constituents of Fort Worth. She later went on to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff.

Her relationships across the Hill—built over two decades of trusted service—have already opened doors and helped my freshman office hit the ground running. Being a new Member of Congress comes with plenty of unknowns, but thanks to Val's steady leadership, these first few months have been marked by order, effectiveness, and forward momentum. Since taking office, I've relied on Val to help build a strong team and good culture that ensures we are delivering results for the people of Indiana's 8th District. The 119th Congress will be one for history books, and Val will be responsible for many of the core contributions that my office adds to that record.

It is my honor and privilege to recognize Valerie Nelson for her 20 years of public service in the House of Representatives. Few staffers reach this milestone, and even fewer do so with the level of dedication, professionalism, and grace that Val has consistently shown. We are all better for her service, thankful for her selfless dedication—and I'm truly grateful to have her on my team.

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 Tuesday, May 6, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 8

9 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SD-138

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Michael Obadal, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Army, and Sean O'Keefe, of Virginia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary, both of the Department of Defense.

SD-G50

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Andrea Travnicek, of North Dakota, and Leslie Beyer, of Texas, both to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and Theodore J. Garrish, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary (Nuclear Energy), and Tristan Abbey, of Florida, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, both of the Department of Energy; to be immediately followed by hearings to examine the nominations of William L. Doffermyre, of Texas, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, and Catherine Jereza, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary (Electricity), and Kyle Haustveit, of Oklahoma, to be an Assistant Secretary (Fossil Energy), both of the Department of Energy.

SD-366

9:45 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Paul Dabbar, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

SR-253

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2026 for the Department of Homeland Security.

SD-124

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine winning the AI race, focusing on strengthening United States capabilities in computing and innovation.

SR-253

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of James O'Neill, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Janette Nesheiwat, of New York, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service.

SD-430

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Brandon Judd, of Idaho, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chile;