

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### CELEBRATING THE BIRTHDAY OF PAULETTE LAWSON

#### HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the impactful life and enduring contributions of Paulette Lawson, a dedicated healthcare professional and community activist whose tireless efforts continue to significantly uplift countless lives.

Born and raised in Chicago on June 6, 1952, Paulette Lawson grew up in a household that instilled the values of hard work and service. Her mother, Sheba Lawson, was a devoted domestic worker, and her father, Washington Lawson, Jr., contributed to the community through his work at Illinois Bell. These foundational experiences shaped the compassionate and resilient spirit that defines her life's journey.

Paulette Lawson pursued her passion for caring for others through education, attending Ashford University, where she earned her certification as a Nursing Assistant and later achieved the esteemed designation of a Licensed Practical Nurse. This progression from Certified Nursing Assistant to Licensed Practical Nurse stands as a testament to her unwavering commitment to professional growth and excellence in healthcare. It was a proud moment that underscores her dedication to continuous learning and providing the highest quality of care.

For an impressive twenty-five years, Ms. Lawson served with distinction at Provident Hospital. Throughout her career there, she was not merely a hardworking nurse; she was a tireless patient advocate, consistently ensuring that those under her care received not only expert medical attention but also a voice and dignified treatment. Her unwavering commitment to her patients exemplifies the very best of the nursing profession.

Beyond her remarkable career in healthcare, Paulette Lawson has been a fervent advocate for social justice and community empowerment. She is an active and dedicated activist with Operation PUSH and Operation Breadbasket, organizations at the forefront of the fight for civil rights and economic justice. Her commitment is further demonstrated by her membership in the inspiring Rainbow Push Choir, where she lends her voice to messages of hope and unity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the enduring accomplishments of Paulette Lawson, a true champion for both health and justice.

### RECOGNIZING THOMAS DELUCA, JR.

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Thomas DeLuca, Jr. has made through his work with the Pasco County Retired K-9 Foundation. In Pasco County and across America, law enforcement K-9's put their lives and bodies through extreme physical conditions every day. Because of this, they always need long term medical care after retirement. The officer/deputy that takes them home as a family member is responsible for the high cost of medical treatment. Mr. DeLuca has found innovative ways to fundraise, the proceeds of which are used to off-set those costs. In 2018, his inaugural golf tournament began to raise funds for the retired K-9's in Pasco and this premier event continues to be successful. Additionally, Mr. DeLuca holds events in our community to increase awareness and support for our retired heroes. Mr. DeLuca, who works full-time, spends countless hours finding resources for the retired K-9's. When hurricanes Helene and Milton ravaged Pasco County, Mr. DeLuca and his family also began pulling together food, clothing, furniture and even helped a neighborhood rebuild. Mr. DeLuca is a shining light in our community, and that rare hero among us who gives selflessly of his time, treasure and talents.

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

### HONORING MATTHEW WILSON OF DYETT HIGH SCHOOL

#### HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate an extraordinary achievement by a remarkable young man from my district, Matthew Wilson, a vital member of the Walter H. Dyett High School for the Arts boys' basketball team, the Eagles. This team achieved a historic victory, winning the 2024-2025 Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Class 2A State Championship with a decisive 52-41 win over Althoff Catholic High School on March 15, 2025.

This championship is more than just a win on the court; it is a profound testament to the resilience, determination, and unity of the Dyett High School community and the vibrant Bronzeville neighborhood. A decade ago, Dyett faced the threat of closure, but through powerful community advocacy and unwavering

commitment, its doors remained open. Today, the Eagles' triumph, in which Matthew Wilson played a crucial role, symbolizes the incredible potential that flourishes when a community invests in its youth and its institutions.

Matthew Wilson, along with his teammates, demonstrated exceptional skill, discipline, and teamwork throughout their season, navigating challenges and competing at the highest level. His hard work and dedication were integral to the team's success, culminating in this well-deserved championship that brings immense pride and joy to his school, family, and the entire community.

I also extend my deepest gratitude to Head Coach Jamaal Gill, II, whose visionary leadership and guidance steered the team to this historic victory, and to Assistant Coaches Kimani Harris, Pierre Adams, and Nathan Townsen, Jr., whose mentorship was vital to the players' development.

Mr. Speaker, Matthew Wilson's contribution to the Dyett Eagles' journey from near closure to state champions is an inspiring narrative for us all. It underscores the critical importance of supporting our public schools and investing in programs that empower young people to achieve their fullest potential. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Matthew Wilson and the entire Dyett High School boys' basketball team on their momentous achievement and in honoring them for the inspiration they provide to communities across our Nation.

### RECOGNIZING TOMMY BAKER

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Tommy Baker has made through his work with NAMI Hernando. Tommy works as the Operations Manager of Meares Plumbing and Electrical and former Board President of NAMI Hernando. He has been a pillar of leadership and unwavering support for mental health in our community. Tommy's impact reaches far beyond boardroom decisions. Tommy brings integrity, dedication, and a true sense of responsibility to every aspect of his volunteer work. As Board President, Tommy played a pivotal role in strengthening NAMI Hernando's foundation, guiding strategic growth, and supporting long-term sustainability. His leadership helped expand outreach efforts and foster new collaborations that increased access to mental health education and support. Tommy's commitment to advocacy inspired the creation of the annual Strike Out Stigma fundraiser, an event that continues to unite the community in support of mental wellness. Building on its success, he spearheaded the launch of Reconstructing Hope—a nonprofit initiative that brought together businesses in the construction industry to raise funds for multiple local

• 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.

nonprofits, including NAMI Hernando. He has consistently gone above and beyond—whether offering professional expertise, mobilizing support through Meares Plumbing, or showing up as a visible advocate for mental health awareness. His quiet leadership, humility, and spirit of service have made a lasting impression on all who work with him.

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NON-DISCRIMINATION HOME RULE ACT OF 2025

#### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Non-Discrimination Home Rule Act of 2025, which would end the applicability of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA) to the District of Columbia government. This bill would treat the D.C. government in the same manner as state governments under RFRA, and allow D.C. to protect LGBTQ+ and reproductive rights.

RFRA, which provides more protection for religious exercise than the First Amendment requires, applies to the federal government and the D.C. government, but not to state governments.

While RFRA was designed to be a shield to protect religious freedom, it is being used, as evidenced by the Supreme Court's 2014 *Hobby Lobby* decision, as a sword to discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community and women. Republicans in Congress have cited RFRA as a justification for trying to overturn D.C. non-discrimination laws. For example, since 2015, Republicans have repeatedly tried to nullify or block D.C.'s Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014, which prohibits employers from discriminating against employees and their families based on reproductive health decisions, claiming, in part, that it violates RFRA.

This bill would help ensure that D.C. is able to enact and carry out non-discrimination laws. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### HONORING JAYDEN MCKINNON OF DYETT HIGH SCHOOL

#### HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate an extraordinary achievement by a remarkable young man from my district, Jayden McKinnon, a vital member of the Walter H. Dyett High School for the Arts boys' basketball team, the Eagles. This team achieved a historic victory, winning the 2024–2025 Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Class 2A State Champion-

ship with a decisive 52–41 win over Althoff Catholic High School on March 15, 2025.

This championship is more than just a win on the court; it is a profound testament to the resilience, determination, and unity of the Dyett High School community and the vibrant Bronzeville neighborhood.

A decade ago, Dyett faced the threat of closure, but through powerful community advocacy and unwavering commitment, its doors remained open. Today, the Eagles' triumph, in which Jayden McKinnon played a crucial role, symbolizes the incredible potential that flourishes when a community invests in its youth and its institutions.

Jayden McKinnon, along with his teammates, demonstrated exceptional skill, discipline, and teamwork throughout their season, navigating challenges and competing at the highest level. His hard work and dedication were integral to the team's success, culminating in this well-deserved championship that brings immense pride and joy to his school, family, and the entire community.

I also extend my deepest gratitude to Head Coach Jamaal Gill, whose visionary leadership and guidance steered the team to this historic victory, and to Assistant Coaches Kimani Harris, Pierre Adams, and Nathan Townsen, Jr., whose mentorship was vital to the players' development.

Jayden McKinnon's contribution to the Dyett Eagles' journey from near closure to state champions is an inspiring narrative for us all. It underscores the critical importance of supporting our public schools and investing in programs that empower young people to achieve their fullest potential.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Jayden McKinnon and the entire Dyett High School boys' basketball team on their momentous achievement and in honoring them for the inspiration they provide to communities across our Nation.

#### RECOGNIZING HUGH TOWNSEND

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Mr. Hugh Townsend has made as a volunteer with the Board of Hunter's Ridge Homeowner's Association. Over the past 30 years, Hugh has worked tirelessly on the Board, mostly serving as President. When safety concerns arose about people walking on the street, he successfully fought for the installation of sidewalks at no cost to our HOA. He negotiated the development of a front entrance monument to maintain the community's visibility. Hugh consistently attends meetings to keep us updated on new laws and changes affecting his community. He pursued certification as a Homeowner Board member before it was required by the state. Regardless of the issue, he remains positive and works towards reasonable resolutions, even while facing medical challenges. Beyond his own community, Hugh volunteers extensively. His roles include Vice Chair of the Penny for Pasco Oversight Committee for Education, Field Training Officer with the Pasco Sheriff's Office Citizens

Service Unit, Board member of the Council of Neighborhood Associations, Eagle Scout Review member, Greek Orthodox Youth Association leader, Juvenile Justice Advisory Board member, and more. He has served in various capacities to improve Pasco County, demonstrating his commitment to volunteerism and community service.

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

#### HONORING NEW JERUSALEM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

#### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the enduring legacy and spiritual leadership of New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, a historic institution founded in 1906 by Reverend Walter A. Robinson in Greenville, Mississippi. Born from the Old Jerusalem Church, New Jerusalem began with eleven members and a powerful vision rooted in faith, unity, and service.

Rev. Robinson served as pastor until 1923, laying a strong foundation for the generations that followed. Under his leadership and that of his successors, the church survived the devastating 1927 flood and continued to grow—constructing a new building in 1951 and establishing the city's first African American church Usher Board in 1928.

New Jerusalem stands firm in its belief that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and that salvation is found through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again. The church emphasizes water baptism, the observance of communion, and a personal, growing relationship with Christ through obedience, spiritual discipline, and transformation.

The church's pastoral legacy includes a line of devoted leaders:

Rev. Walter A. Robinson (1906 to 1923)  
Rev. Eddie Payne (1924 to 1927)  
Rev. Cleveland Williams (1927 to 1932)  
Rev. J.V. Haywood (1933 to 1956), who led the 1951 building reconstruction  
Revs. C.R. Raymond and H.C. Cherry (1956 to 1962)  
Rev. C.H. Moreland (1962 to 1969)  
Rev. Hosea Robinson (1969 to 1985), a spirit-filled leader from Chicago  
Rev. Jesse Jackson (1986 to 2004), known for his Bible-teaching ministry and inspirational voice  
Rev. Myron Holmes (2005 to Present), the youngest minister ever elected by the church whose motto is "Preach to Impact and Not to Impress"

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church for its steadfast service, historic leadership, and spiritual influence in the Mississippi Delta. It stands today not only as a house of worship, but as a pillar of hope, faith, and transformation for the community it so faithfully serves.