

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING JEROME H.  
UNDERWOOD

**HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Caribbean American Heritage Month to pay tribute to a distinguished community leader from Rochester, New York: Jerome H. Underwood.

As Chief Executive Officer of Action for a Better Community and a founding member of the Greater Rochester Black Agenda Group, Jerome Underwood has led with clarity, purpose, and unwavering integrity. Throughout his years of dedicated service, he has been a moral compass and unifying force in our community, championing social justice and equity.

Born on the Caribbean island of Antigua, Jerome brought with him to the United States a deep-rooted sense of community and justice. In Rochester, he has emerged as a tireless advocate for racial equity and economic justice, working to expose and dismantle the structural racism that continues to harm communities of color.

Jerome's leadership extends far beyond boardrooms and policy tables. He is also a powerful role model for our youth. Merging his love of soccer with a deep passion for mentorship and "peaceful" demeanor, he has served as Director of Coaching for the River Flow Soccer Club and President of the Flower City Soccer League.

It is with great pride and admiration that I recognize Jerome H. Underwood this Caribbean American Heritage Month. His unwavering commitment to equity, youth empowerment, and community transformation continues to uplift our community here in Rochester and beyond.

HONORING DON HEWITT

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Mr. Don Hewitt, a trailblazer in sustainable urban development and a visionary entrepreneur whose work has made a transformative impact on communities throughout Jackson, Mississippi, and beyond.

Mr. Hewitt is the founder and owner of Advanced Technology Building Solutions (ATBS), established in 2004 and headquartered in Jackson. With more than 20 years of experience in real estate development and urban planning, Mr. Hewitt has consistently prioritized community-centered solutions that emphasize walkability, environmental design, and economic opportunity.

Under his leadership, ATBS has emerged as a leader in mixed-use developments that

integrate green spaces, affordable housing, retail accessibility, and local business engagement. The company's initiatives frequently involve partnerships with public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, and government entities—leading to the revitalization of underutilized spaces into vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods.

Currently, ATBS is collaborating with the West Jackson Community Development Corporation and the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation to implement an innovative urban streetscape project in West Jackson. This development will offer affordable workspace for local entrepreneurs and startups, fostering economic opportunity and nurturing local talent.

Mr. Hewitt's commitment to sustainability extends beyond physical infrastructure. As a participant in the AI Business Accelerator Cohort, he is integrating artificial intelligence into project planning to optimize sustainability metrics and enhance community engagement. His forward-thinking approach ensures that urban development remains both efficient and equitable.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Mr. Don Hewitt for his service, leadership, and unwavering dedication to building a stronger, more inclusive Mississippi. His work exemplifies what it means to develop with the community and for the community.

RECOGNIZING NORMA THOM

**HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Caribbean American Heritage Month to recognize a trailblazing leader and advocate from Rochester, New York: Norma Thom.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Norma brought to the United States a deep commitment to culture, education, and service. After arriving in Rochester, she transitioned from her role as a schoolteacher to become a prominent voice for the Caribbean American community.

Norma is a founding member of The Rochester West Indian Festival Organization, a nonprofit that has celebrated and promoted Caribbean heritage in Rochester for over 42 years. Through her leadership, she has fostered unity, cultural pride, and greater visibility for Caribbean Americans across our region.

Beyond her community advocacy, Norma also built a distinguished professional career. She spent 29 years at Eastman Kodak Company, where she worked in the supply chain and logistics department. She retired in 2003, leaving behind a legacy of excellence in both her workplace and her community.

It is an honor to recognize Norma Thom during Caribbean American Heritage Month. Her enduring legacy continues to uplift Rochester and inspire future generations.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO PERMIT THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES TO BE FLOWN AT HALF-STAFF IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A MAYOR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill that would make a small but respectful change to federal law by adding the Mayor of the District of Columbia to the list of named principals for whom the President shall order the U.S. flag be flown at half-staff. Current law states that the President shall make this order "upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory." Surely the D.C. Mayor, who has the same responsibilities as governors of states and territories, should qualify as such a principal. This bill is part of our series of bills to ensure equal treatment for the over 700,000 D.C. residents. In the 116th Congress, the House Committee on the Judiciary passed this bill.

Congress has already acknowledged that D.C. is entitled to a place among the states for certain honors. For example, legislation we got enacted gave D.C. a coin after D.C. was omitted from legislation creating coins for the states and required the armed services to display the D.C. flag whenever the flags of the states are displayed. We got D.C.'s Frederick Douglass and Pierre L'Enfant statues placed in the Capitol, alongside two statues from each state. We also successfully worked with the U.S. Postal Service to create a D.C. stamp, like the stamps for the states, and with the National Park Service to add the D.C. flag alongside the state flags near Union Station.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING MARLENE HENRY

**HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Caribbean American Heritage Month to recognize an exceptional public servant from Rochester, New York: Marlene Henry.

As the owner of PeppaPot Catering, Marlene Henry is far more than a business owner—she is a quiet but powerful force for good in our community. Time and again, she has offered her culinary talents in service of others, often at her own expense. Whether providing food at no cost to those in need or offering discounted services for community events, Marlene exemplifies the spirit of generosity that defines Caribbean American heritage.

● 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.

Her commitment to service extends well beyond the kitchen. Marlene is among the first to volunteer for community events, including Caribbean American Heritage Month celebrations, Mother's Day initiatives, and cultural festivals. She approaches every act of service with humility, never seeking recognition, but always delivering excellence.

Marlene's impact is also felt through her efforts to pass on cultural traditions to the next generation. She devotes time to teaching young people how to prepare and appreciate authentic Caribbean dishes, ensuring that the flavors, stories, and values of our shared heritage endure.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Marlene Henry this Caribbean American Heritage Month. Her deep compassion, cultural pride, and unwavering service enrich our community and inspire us all.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district at Fort Bragg and missed a vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 160; YEA on Roll Call No. 161; YEA on Roll Call No. 162; and YEA on Roll Call No. 163.

#### RECOGNIZING ROOSEVELT MAREUS

#### HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Caribbean American Heritage Month to recognize an extraordinary leader from the Rochester community: Roosevelt Mareus.

As Executive Director and Dean of the Rochester Educational Opportunity Center, or REOC, Roosevelt Mareus has led with vision, integrity, and a deep commitment to uplifting others. Under his leadership, REOC has continued its vital mission of empowering individuals, helping countless students break the cycle of poverty and reach their utmost potential.

Born in Haiti, Roosevelt's journey is one of remarkable resilience and transformation. As a young man overcoming adversity, he found direction and opportunity through the very institution he would one day lead. Beginning his career at REOC as a security guard, he steadily rose through the ranks to become Executive Director. His life story is a testament to his perseverance and dedication.

Roosevelt's passion for service extends far beyond Rochester. Deeply connected to his Haitian roots, he founded Elevate Haiti Ministries, an organization dedicated to building an orphanage and school in Haiti. Over the past decade, Elevate Haiti has offered critical education and housing for young boys.

During Caribbean American Heritage Month, it is my great privilege to recognize Roosevelt Mareus. His leadership and service continues to inspire and uplift communities both here at home and abroad.

#### HONORING THE USS TRITON

#### HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for two reasons: to honor the crew members who served aboard the USS *Triton* (SSRN-586) submarine, and to commend the Port of Benton for commissioning a new commemorative wall honoring the *Triton* and her crew.

Commissioned in 1959, the USS *Triton* holds a special place in the history of the U.S. Navy. Powered by two nuclear reactors, the *Triton* was the first submarine to complete a submerged circumnavigation of the globe.

During the Cold War, the *Triton* was a vital part of the Navy's defense strategy as a leader in peace and security around the world. The members who served aboard her were at the forefront of this mission, often enduring long months of isolation and unpredictable conditions aboard the vessel. But their shared dedication and expertise led them to achieve one of the most groundbreaking missions in naval history.

The USS *Triton* Submarine Memorial Park was formally dedicated in Richland, Washington, on November 10, 2011, to commemorate the submarine and her crew. Central Washington is proud to be home to this piece of our Nation's history, and I thank the Port of Benton for honoring the crew members and preserving their legacy.

#### RECOGNIZING ROSE BONNICK

#### HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 13, 2025*

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Caribbean American Heritage Month to recognize an exceptional public servant from Rochester, New York: Rose Bonnick.

Born in Jamaica, Rose is a proud member of the Caribbean American community and a tireless advocate for equity and opportunity. As a Monroe County Legislator and Community Affairs Coordinator for New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney, she has dedicated her career to amplifying underrepresented voices and advancing policies that create a lasting impact. Whether championing local initiatives or supporting statewide policy efforts, she brings passion and dedication to every role she undertakes.

Rose is known for her unwavering commitment to uplifting her constituents, addressing systemic disparities, and building a stronger, more inclusive Rochester. She embodies the very essence of public service, leading with empathy and an unshakable belief in the power of community.

Long before she held public office, Rose was deeply embedded in the Rochester community through her longstanding work helping Jamaican immigrants navigate complex landscapes of services and programs. She became affectionately known among family and friends as a "community connector"—someone with a unique ability to guide others through the hoops and ladders of life. Her knowledge of local systems and her natural inclination to serve positioned her as a trusted resource and advocate, particularly for new arrivals seeking stability and opportunity.

She consistently creates spaces for engagement, education, and empowerment, fostering the next generation of civic leaders. Her vision of a more just and equitable society is not just spoken—it is actively pursued through her daily work and presence in the community.

This Caribbean American Heritage Month, it is with deep respect and admiration that I recognize Rose Bonnick. Her advocacy continues to uplift and enrich our community, leaving a lasting impact for generations to come.