

HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING  
OF FENTANYL ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 11, 2025*

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to S. 331, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

This bill is not a solution to the proliferation of Fentanyl Related Substances (FRS) in America. We need legislation and investments in health interventions that will save lives while taking meaningful action to stop illicit drug sales.

S. 331 would permanently criminalize all FRS based solely on their molecular structure. This would seriously hamper the medical community from working on the development of treatments to fentanyl overdose or other medically beneficial FRSs. The HALT Fentanyl Act also imposes harmful mandatory minimum sentences. Decades of research shows that mandatory minimum laws that focus solely on supply reduction and incarceration are not effective in slowing the flow of illicit drugs into our country or the rates of overdoses in our communities. In fact, the current fentanyl epidemic has been found to have its roots in crackdowns on prescription opioids and heroin that were not paired with evidence-based overdose prevention and treatment services. We should be pursuing policy solutions that incorporate evidence-based strategies to addiction and overdose prevention that are rooted in health and science, not just increasing criminalization.

Congress should bring forward a comprehensive bill that reflects the input of medical professionals, addiction specialists, researchers, and law enforcement. Republicans are trying to present a “quick and easy” solution to a complex problem.

HONORING DANNY GARCIA AS A  
DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL  
FLORIDA DURING LGBTQ+ PRIDE MONTH

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Danny Garcia is a proud first-generation American, born to Costa Rican parents, and a lifelong Florida native who proudly calls Orlando home.

Danny's dedication to the LGBTQ+ community began early. As a youth, he volunteered with organizations focused on HIV awareness and support, including the Pediatric AIDS Foundation and Hope & Help.

Today, that same passion continues through his leadership as the board president of The LGBT+ Center Orlando, where he works to advance visibility, equality, and vital services for the community.

As a teenager, Danny was a member of the Delta Youth Alliance, which eventually became the Orlando Youth Alliance. It was there that he first found a sense of community, marching in his first Pride parade before he even had his learner's permit and volunteering at fundraisers and local events that supported LGBTQ+ youth.

In the late 1990's, Danny began freelancing for Watermark, Central Florida and Tampa Bay's LGBTQ+ newspaper—a publication he had followed since its founding in 1994. That role marked the start of his journey in LGBTQ+ media, leading to opportunities with other publications and platforms that elevated queer voices and stories.

In 2014, Danny joined Watermark full-time as an account manager. Through hard work and a deep understanding of the community he serves, he was promoted to become the publication's sales director.

Over the years, Danny has remained committed to uplifting LGBTQ+ voices and using media as a tool for connection, representation, and change. His story is one of advocacy, authenticity, and lifelong pride in the community he serves.

RECOGNIZING JAMEN MONBARREN

**HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to recognize Mr. Jamen Monbarren for his service at Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative (WREC) and his remarkable role in the Light Up Navajo Project. In May, a courageous team of 16 WREC employees traveled over 1,800 miles to the remote, rugged terrains of Arizona and New Mexico, where they spent two weeks installing vital electrical infrastructure for Navajo families who have lived without power for generations. Their efforts brought light, safety, and hope to communities long overlooked, allowing children to study after dark, families to preserve food, and elders to live with greater comfort. Despite daunting challenges and limited equipment, the WREC team completed a demanding project in just eight days—far ahead of expectations—demonstrating professionalism, humility, and unwavering commitment to this life-changing mission.

The impact of WREC's work goes far beyond electricity; it represents a bridge to connection, opportunity and the return of future generations to their ancestral homes. The emotional moment when power was turned on for the impacted families—bringing tears of joy and renewed hope—is a testament to the profound difference this project made. WREC's participation in the “Light Up Navajo” initiative reflects not only their technical expertise but also their heart and respect for the people they serve. Their dedication has energized ten homesteads and countless lives, creating a legacy of service that embodies the true spirit of cooperative values. The WREC team's journey inspires us all, proving that with compassion and teamwork, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome to light up lives and communities. I commend the entire team for their efforts on this worthwhile endeavor and for their ongoing service to our local community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ENERGY  
TRANSITIONS INITIATIVE AUTHORIZATION ACT

**HON. ED CASE**

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my Energy Transitions Initiative Authorization Act to expand resilient and reliable energy for some of our nation's most vulnerable regions—isolated and Tribal communities.

Isolated and Tribal communities often share common energy obstacles, such as limited energy infrastructure, high costs of imported energy and vulnerability to natural disasters. For example, in my home state of Hawaii, which ranks as the state with the most expensive power in the Nation, residential electricity rates average 34 cents per kilowatt, far exceeding the national average by threefold. We are not alone in this problem. For example, in Maine the cost of electricity hovers at 22 cents per kilowatt, coming in at 13 percent higher than the national average, in part due to its many islands and isolated communities.

My colleagues and I representing these communities intimately understand the challenges that isolated and Tribal communities face and are working to address them. In Hawaii, our state leaders launched a clean energy initiative in 2008 to aim to use 100 percent renewable electricity to power our entire state by 2045. We focused on clean energy, which we can self-sustain, and recognizing that good portions of our energy come from overseas and potentially adversarial countries, green energy can also help us advance national security interests. As for my role in this effort, I have focused on supporting federal programs that help advance these goals.

These unique energy resilience challenges in remote and Tribal areas are the focus of the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Transitions Initiative Program. Since its inception, this program has partnered with over 25 Tribal, coastal, remote and island communities across the Nation to help them secure reliable and affordable energy.

The Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Program provides customized technical and financial assistance to community projects aimed at accessing reliable and affordable power and increasing energy resilience. Specific community projects include solar power interconnection, analyzing wind energy potential, conducting wildfire preparedness, advancing weatherization retrofits and implementing microgrids and battery storage projects.

The draw of this program is that it doesn't come in and dictate how communities reach their clean energy goals. It is a partnership program that values and appreciates the perspective of local and Tribal communities, actively listening and incorporating community feedback.

In Hawaii, the Energy Transitions Initiative has provided technical assistance to the City and County of Honolulu to conduct microgrid location analyses for regional hybrid microgrids and map designs. Because Hawaii is prone to severe weather conditions that have previously caused long-duration power outages, our islands have identified hybrid microgrids as one method to improve resilience. Microgrids are best suited to areas

prone to prolonged outages during weather events, with clusters of customers and potential availability of renewable energy sources. The product of this partnership was a map identifying potential locations given a set of criteria that stakeholders prioritized in the areas of criticality, vulnerability and societal impact.

This program helps far more than just Hawaii. For example, it helps the Aquinnah and Chilmark Tribes in Massachusetts transition to 100 percent renewable energy by 2040 through retrofits, microgrids and efficiency measures, and Bainbridge Island in Washington analyze the solar and water power options with a goal of transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy by 2040.

Although this program has helped so many across our great Nation, it has never been formally codified. Our bill, the Energy Transitions Initiative Authorization Act, will ensure this program can continue the technical assistance offered to remote, island and Tribal communities that is unique and accommodating to their expertise and deep knowledge of local challenges and solutions.

The bill will authorize \$31 million for each fiscal year from 2026 to 2030 to carry out the bill's objectives. No later than 1 year after the establishment of the bill, the Comptroller General will conduct an audit of the initiative to ensure proper use of the funds. The audit will also result in a report with recommendations to improve the program, which is important because evaluating and improving the initiative is paramount for its continued progress.

I believe the Energy Transitions Initiative Authorization Act can further clean energy advancements in our most vulnerable communities. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill and our isolated and Tribal areas across our Nation.

Mahalo.

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#### RECOGNIZING JOUNGHUN BANG

### HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Jounghun Bang, Vice President of the Dallas Taekwondo Association, whose leadership and mentorship have left a lasting mark on youth and families throughout North Texas.

Through his commitment to training the next generation of athletes, Mr. Bang has fostered excellence on and off the mat. His students' success in national competitions reflects not only technical mastery but the values of perseverance and discipline that he instills.

Mr. Bang's contributions extend beyond the dojang. His support for the 23rd Annual Korean American National Sports Festival exemplifies his broader mission to highlight cultural pride and build community.

For his tireless dedication to sport, culture, and the development of young people, we extend our heartfelt thanks and congratulations.

#### RECOGNIZING CLINT JACKSON

### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to recognize Mr. Clint Jackson for his service at Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative (WREC) and his remarkable role in the Light Up Navajo Project. In May, a courageous team of 16 WREC employees traveled over 1,800 miles to the remote, rugged terrains of Arizona and New Mexico, where they spent two weeks installing vital electrical infrastructure for Navajo families who have lived without power for generations. Their efforts brought light, safety, and hope to communities long overlooked, allowing children to study after dark, families to preserve food, and elders to live with greater comfort. Despite daunting challenges and limited equipment, the WREC team completed a demanding project in just eight days—far ahead of expectations—demonstrating professionalism, humility, and unwavering commitment to this life-changing mission.

The impact of WREC's work goes far beyond electricity; it represents a bridge to connection, opportunity, and the return of future generations to their ancestral homes. The emotional moment when power was turned on for the impacted families—bringing tears of joy and renewed hope—is a testament to the profound difference this project made. WREC's participation in the "Light Up Navajo" initiative reflects not only their technical expertise but also their heart and respect for the people they serve. Their dedication has energized ten homesteads and countless lives, creating a legacy of service that embodies the true spirit of cooperative values. The WREC team's journey inspires us all, proving that with compassion and teamwork, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome to light up lives and communities. I commend the entire team for their efforts on this worthwhile endeavor and for their ongoing service to our local community.

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#### HONORING DAVID ROMERO AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA DURING LGBTQ+ PRIDE MONTH

### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, David Romero is a U.S. Air Force veteran, LGBTQ+ advocate, and community leader recognized for his dedication to uplifting others through faith, service, and resilience in Florida's Ninth Congressional District.

A longtime resident of Celebration, Florida, David serves on the Orange County Mayor's Veterans Advisory Council as the LGBTQ+ veterans advocate. In this role, he brings forward the needs and perspectives of LGBTQ+ veterans—especially those whose contributions were historically overlooked due to discrimination. David is also an active member of the Veterans Club of Celebration, where he lives openly as a gay veteran and fosters dialogue, visibility, and community support.

In addition to his veteran advocacy, David served in a leadership role on Celebration's Technology Committee, demonstrating his consistent commitment to civic engagement and community betterment. For 14 years, he worked at the Walt Disney Company, where he contributed to multiple DEI platforms and helped shape internal policies around equity and representation. His efforts reflected both professional commitment and personal courage in the face of past trauma related to homophobia and marginalization.

A person of deep faith, David is a member of Community Presbyterian Church in Celebration, where he is open about his sexuality and his relationship with Jesus Christ. Through this openness, he serves as a role model to others navigating the intersection of faith and identity.

David's advocacy work spans mental health awareness, veteran support access, and inclusion for those discharged under unjust military policies. His voice has helped shift perceptions in veteran spaces and beyond, proving that service and identity are not mutually exclusive.

Through his integrity, leadership, and faith, David Romero has made a lasting impact on Central Florida's LGBTQ+ and veteran communities. His story is one of courage, healing, and service.

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#### CELEBRATING THE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF PASTOR JAMES E. GILES

### HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Pastor James E. Giles' 75th birthday and his dedication to our community. Pastor Giles has been a beacon of hope for so many, and exemplifies what it means to be a true leader. Because of his tireless work, Pastor Giles has made Buffalo and Western New York a better place.

Serving as President and CEO of Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Pastor Giles provides counseling services and advocates for community members in need throughout Western New York—cementing himself as a strong force of the restorative justice movement within Erie County. He contributes his time to the Northland Workforce Training Center and Youth Visionaries as well as serving a role on the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities and City of Buffalo EMS Board. Beyond his work as a changemaker, Pastor Giles ministers at the Greater Works of Deliverance Fellowship. Earning multiple certificates in Psychology, Sociology, African American History, and in New York State Substance Abuse Counseling—applying each of them in his daily roles to serve his community.

Pastor Giles has been a leader in Buffalo's East Side for more than five decades. His passion for social and economic justice has uplifted his work as a community servant. He credits his success to his beloved wife First Lady Delores Giles, their two children Antonio and Alisha Giles, and his loving grandson Jalen.

Today, we celebrate more than five decades of Pastor Giles' unwavering efforts of commitment made to serve our community and the initiative to transform lives across Western New York. Let us also recognize a the countless lives he has touched and the profound