

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.

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.

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.

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

impact he has made along the way. I congratulate Pastor James E. Giles on this significant milestone. His service is a blessing, and we look forward to many more years of his inspired leadership.

RECOGNIZING JOSE SANTIAGO

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. Jose Santiago 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.

APPRECIATING DAVE OLSON

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Dr. Dave Olson, President and Program Manager at Savannah River Mission Completion (SRMC), upon retirement after more than 40 years of dedicated work and service.

Before being named President and Program Manager, Dr. Olson served as the president of the former Savannah River Site (SRS) liquid waste contractor. He has years of experience in safety, security, project and risk management, maintenance and engineering in nuclear materials processing, and much more.

SRMC is responsible for the safe reduction of curies in aging waste tanks at SRS. As one of the Department of Energy's largest production sites, SRS performs activities ranging from environmental cleanup and protection to nuclear materials storage and disposition.

Under the leadership of Dr. Olson, SRMC has worked more than 21 million hours without an injury that has caused a missed work day, ensured that all facilities are operating safely and efficiently, and met five key regulatory milestones to remove waste from and clean tanks to prepare them for operational closure.

Dr. Olson has many accomplishments to be proud of and has aided greatly in the success of SRMC.

Best wishes for a wonderful retirement. I am appreciative for all he has done for South Carolina.

RECOGNIZING THE WESTFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT ON THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Mr. KEAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Westfield Fire Department as they celebrate 150 years of service to our community. Since its founding as a volunteer fire department in 1875, the WFD has grown into a career department, providing essential fire protection services to the residents of Westfield and the surrounding area. Over the past 150 years, they have answered the call in times of need—often under dangerous and demanding conditions—a true testament to the courage, duty, and selflessness that embody the very best of New Jersey's first responders. I extend my deepest congratulations to the Westfield Fire Department on this milestone anniversary and look forward to their continued growth and commitment to public safety for many years to come.

HONORING MARC ESPESO 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, Marc Espeso is a dedicated public servant, skilled communicator, and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. Since his appointment in August 2019, he has served as special assistant to Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings. In addition, he holds the role of digital communications manager for the county. This dual position provides him with a unique perspective that combines executive insight with hands-on communication strategy.

Mr. Espeso values efficient and effective communication to Orange County's 1.5 million residents and 75 million annual visitors. In his first year as special assistant, he played a key role in disseminating critical health and safety information during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By leveraging partnerships among local, state, and federal agencies, he ensured accurate and accessible updates reached LGBTQ+ residents, visitors, and the broader public across the county.

His experience in crisis communication has been an asset to the county's Emergency Operations Center. He has contributed to the development of award-winning communication plans that delivered life-saving information to residents before, during, and after major storms that impacted Central Florida, including Hurricanes Ian and Nicole in 2022 and Hurricane Milton in 2024.

In addition to promoting county programs and services that can benefit LGBTQ+ residents, Mr. Espeso has helped highlight the region's tourism and hospitality industry. When organizations consider where to host events that will ultimately benefit the local economy, he effectively highlights Orange County's ongoing commitment to fostering an environment where all individuals and businesses are treated with dignity and respect.

Beyond his government service, Mr. Espeso serves as vice president of the Board of Directors at the LGBTQ+ Center Orlando. Since 2021, he has helped fundraise to advance the Center's mission of empowering the LGBTQ+ community and its allies through advocacy, education, information, and support.

OPPOSITION TO H.R. 884, H.R. 2056, AND H.R. 2096

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, last week the Republican Majority in the House of Representatives decided that they know better than the residents of the District of Columbia what their local government needs.

All Members of Congress are sent here by our constituents to represent their interests, and to vote on matters of federal importance. We aren't sent here to rule on specific local ordinances or funding decisions made by the cities and counties in any of our districts. Yet Republicans have brought three bills to the floor—H.R. 884, H.R. 2056, and H.R. 2096—to do exactly that. They want to tell the District of Columbia's 700,000 residents that the laws and policies they have voted for, and that were crafted by their local elected officials, are null and void.

Mr. Speaker, none of us ran for or were elected to serve as D.C. Council members. I've been a city council member. It's a very different job, with a direct line of responsibility to the residents who elect you to deal with everything from potholes to public safety. That local representation and local responsiveness is a key part of our democracy, and Republicans are proposing to strip that local self-governance away from the residents of the District of Columbia.

If Republicans want to take steps to address an issue with national importance, they can bring forward a bill that enforces it nationally. I will not vote for these attempts to decide those issues for a single district at the local level, whether in the District of Columbia or in the districts of any Member here.

One of the bills before us last week, H.R. 884, would repeal D.C.'s local law that allows