

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I was delayed in arriving to the first vote of the vote series on June 10, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 162, H.R. 2096.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. PAUL TONKO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 183, and NAY on Roll Call No. 184.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JAKE AUCHINCLOSS**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call Vote number 183 on H.R. 875, I mistakenly recorded my vote as YES when I should have voted No.

## RECOGNIZING BARBARA COLLURA, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF RESOLVE: THE NATIONAL INFERTILITY ASSOCIATION

**HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Barbara Collura, a long-time advocate for family-building equality, who is stepping down after more than 20 years of leadership with RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association.

During her tenure, Barbara's leadership was key to furthering RESOLVE's missions: lifting up the voices of millions of Americans struggling with infertility and fighting to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, income, or geography, can access the care they need to build their families.

Her work included testifying before Congress, meeting with lawmakers and federal agencies, organizing advocates, and working toward a world where infertility is recognized as a disease that deserves attention, compassion, and coverage.

Her tenure has been marked by meaningful policy progress, including expanded insurance coverage for fertility care at the state level, and increased protections for IVF.

As someone who relied on access to IVF to have my twins, I know personally how important it is to raise more awareness about infertility and expand access to fertility treatments. I have been proud to work with RESOLVE under Barbara's leadership to push for com-

mon sense legislation that would offer hope to millions of families struggling with infertility.

At a time when reproductive freedom is under attack, Barbara has stood firm in defense of all paths to parenthood—because infertility is not only part of the reproductive health conversation, but central to it.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Barbara Collura for her extraordinary contributions to the infertility community. Her legacy is one of hope, progress, and an unwavering commitment to the idea that everyone deserves the chance to build a family.

## CONGRATULATING DON JOHNSON ON HIS RETIREMENT AS THE CEO OF GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS

**HON. DARIN LAHOOD**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Don Johnson for his decades of dedicated service in the nonprofit sector and his impactful tenure as President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of Central Illinois. In this role, Johnson led the organization to expand workforce development efforts and launched new initiatives aimed at supporting some of the most vulnerable populations in Central Illinois.

Johnson earned his Bachelor of Science from Eastern Illinois University and a Master of Science from Western Illinois University. Before joining Goodwill in 2016, he served as Executive Director of the Hult Center for Healthy Living and as Vice President of Community Investments at the Heart of Illinois United Way. In those roles, he championed data-driven community investments, built expansive volunteer networks, and led public health and education initiatives, including 211, Success by Six, and Supporting Student Access.

During Johnson's tenure at Goodwill, the organization broadened its mission beyond traditional job training and donation-based stores. Under his leadership, Goodwill introduced innovative programs that supported children and families at risk of violence and created a new job placement program for neurodivergent young adults. One of his biggest projects being the expansion of the General Wayne A. Downing Home for Veterans, which helped raise nearly \$1.5 million for the strengthening of services for local veterans.

Don Johnson's tireless leadership and commitment to the non-profit sector has left a lasting impact on Central Illinois. His work has advanced economic opportunity, human dignity, and community well-being. I congratulate Don on his retirement and wish him, his wife Kim, and their two daughters all the best in this next chapter of life.

## HONORING PASTOR WARREN STEWART, SR.

**HON. GREG STANTON**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a remarkable public servant, leader, and civil

rights trailblazer, Pastor Warren Stewart, Sr., on the occasion of his retirement as Senior Pastor at Arizona's First Institutional Baptist Church.

God called Pastor Stewart to Arizona 48 years ago, and he has been speaking truth to power in the state ever since. Each Sunday, Pastor Stewart's sermons and service work inspired Arizonans to better their community and uplift their neighbors. From the helm of Phoenix's oldest African American Baptist church, Pastor Stewart used his platform to advance justice and civil rights across our state. His guiding principle: Jesus and Justice work together.

His advocacy is well illustrated by the battle to establish Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a state holiday. By 1992, Arizona was the last state refusing to recognize MLK Day, despite the federal holiday being signed into law nearly a decade prior. Pastor Stewart fought to correct this, leading multiple movements to get the holiday initiative on the ballot. He mobilized coalitions across political spectrums, religions, and cultural backgrounds to come together to win this historic, long overdue vote.

As the longest-serving leader of the First Institutional Baptist Church, Pastor Stewart has traveled extensively, preaching in 39 states and territories and 60 countries, and has received many accolades for his contributions to our community and beyond. Following the teachings of the Gospel, his work always focused on the poorest and neediest: immigrants, unsheltered people and veterans, and those suffering from mental health issues.

Pastor Stewart and the Church turned Christian values into action. FIBCO Family Services, Samaritan House for Homeless Families, Ujima House for Unwed Teenage Mothers and their Infants, and the Broadway House, all created under Pastor Stewart, minister to those most in need of compassion and care. FIBCO has become a hallmark in Phoenix's nonprofit scene and has even taken their mission abroad, expanding across Africa.

Pastor Stewart's impressive academic and public service record led to roles as Chair of the National Immigration Forum and President of American Baptist Churches of the Pacific Southwest. He was proclaimed a "State History Maker" by the Arizona Historical Society. Under unanimous direction of the Phoenix City Council, the street in front of the First Institutional Baptist Church was renamed "Dr. Warren H. Stewart Way".

Today, all of Arizona congratulates our very own "living legend" on his well-deserved retirement. Pastor Stewart's career and contributions have cemented him as one of Arizona's greatest religious leaders.

I have personally been blessed to know him as a friend and trusted advisor. He'll be the first to tell you he couldn't have enjoyed such a long career without the love and support of his wife, Reverend Dr. Karen Stewart, and their children and grandchildren. We thank the entire Stewart family for sharing him with us.

I thank Pastor Stewart for his decades of service to our community, and may your quest for moral justice continue in your next chapter. Godspeed.

HONORING THE NASWA RESORT'S ANNIVERSARY AND THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF HOPE MARKIS

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the NASWA Resort's anniversary and in memory of their dedicated owner, Hope Markis.

The NASWA Resort is one of the Lakes Region's most iconic establishments, founded by Greek immigrants and its legacy carried on by their daughter, Hope Markis, and her family. Starting as just a few cabins, the Markis family has transformed the NASWA Resort into the hospitable and beautiful place it is today. Over the years, they have grown their business from an inn to the resort we know, expanding to include more options for entertainment, food, and adventure.

Hope Markis was truly a leader, through both her work in pioneering the resort and her active involvement in her community. Her legacy truly lives in her hospitality and generosity, whether that was in the way she welcomed guests to the resort or in her support of veterans and first responders. The way that she cared for her community will not be forgotten, and that care lives on in her children and grandchildren, who continue to run the NASWA Resort. Certainly, what she has built as a businesswoman and as a matriarch will be felt by all of those who come to the resort and experience her hard work and dedication.

The NASWA Resort is not just an important piece of New Hampshire's tourist economy, but a multigenerational family business that is a vital part of the Lakes Region. New Hampshire owes Hope and her family a debt of gratitude for all that they have brought to the region and the work they have done to better the community around them.

On behalf of the constituents of New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I share my condolences with the Markis family, including her children and her grandchildren. I would once again like to extend my condolences to her family and wish them all the very best in this time of grieving.

CELEBRATING SHIRLEY SMITH SOUTHERLAND'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Shirley Smith Southerland's 90th Birthday on July 26, 2025. Shirley Smith Southerland was born in Wallace, North Carolina in 1935, and is a mother of 4 children, 1 boy and 3 girls. She was an award-winning hairdresser before working for Princess House Inc., becoming one of its top five independent sales managers in the country. Known as "Yaya" by her 21 grandchildren and great grandchildren, she is a devoted and loving grandmother. We celebrate her this month as a shining example of a civic-minded American—through her service dedication, hard work, respect for others, and active participa-

tion in democracy. She shows us what it means to be a model citizen.

CELEBRATING MARK RATNER'S 20 YEARS OF SERVICE IN CONGRESS

**HON. JACK BERGMAN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, on this 27th day in the month of June in the year 2025, we recognize Mark Ratner of Battle Creek, Michigan, for concluding his time on Capitol Hill after more than 20 years of outstanding service to the American people in the United States House of Representatives.

Ratner's career in public service has been marked by a steadfast commitment to the people of Michigan and the nation. A proud graduate of Michigan State University, Ratner began his journey serving Michigan Congressman Joe Schwarz and went on to devote 16 remarkable years working for Michigan Congressman Fred Upton. During his tenure with Congressman Upton, Ratner's leadership as Legislative Director and Deputy Chief of Staff was instrumental in advancing critical legislative priorities, particularly in the field of healthcare, where his expertise and dedication helped shape policies that improved the lives of countless Americans.

Ratner further distinguished himself by bringing his wealth of experience and steady hand to the office of Wisconsin Congressman BRYAN STEIL, where he served as Chief of Staff. His contributions extended beyond Michigan and Wisconsin, including his service with Louisiana Senator BILL CASSIDY, reflecting a career dedicated to principled governance.

Throughout his decades of service, Ratner has been known for his tireless work ethic, his keen understanding of complex policy matters, and his unwavering integrity. His efforts, especially in healthcare policy, have left an indelible impact on the legislative process and have helped ensure that the voices of his constituents were heard and represented with honor and diligence.

As Ratner concludes his exceptional career in the U.S. House of Representatives, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for his many years of faithful service. His dedication has set a standard of excellence in public service, and his contributions will continue to benefit the American people for years to come.

We wish Ratner all the best in his future endeavors and thank him for his extraordinary commitment to our country. Go Green.

INTRODUCTION OF THE INVASIVE SPECIES RESPONSE ACT

**HON. ED CASE**

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 27, 2025*

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a critical and escalating threat to our environment and economy, invasive species, and to ask for support of my proposed Invasive Species Response Act.

Invasive species jeopardize the delicate balance of our ecosystems, as they can

outcompete, prey on or introduce diseases to our native flora and fauna. The consequences of these disruptions are severe, leading to declines in biodiversity, diminishing the resilience of our ecosystems in the face of environmental change.

Beyond ecological damage, invasive species impose billions in economic costs each year. They harm agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism by reducing crop yields, damaging forests, disrupting marine ecosystems and degrading natural landscapes that communities and industries rely on.

In Hawaii, this threat is especially urgent. Hawaii's isolation has led to the evolution of many endemic species that are found nowhere else on Earth. Unfortunately, these native species often lack the defenses to compete with or resist the pressures of invasive plants and animals, which can rapidly alter ecosystems and displace local species. In Hawaii, invasive species have caused significant ecological damage, threatening the survival of native birds and plants. Protecting Hawaii's unique biodiversity is not just an environmental necessity; it is a cultural imperative that reflects the identity and heritage of the Hawaiian people.

Invasive species are also not just a localized problem; they pose a significant threat to the integrity of our natural world. Addressing this crisis requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach, focusing on prevention, early detection and effective management strategies to safeguard our vulnerable ecosystems.

In response to this urgent need, I am jointly introducing the Invasive Species Response Act with my colleague, Congressman JIM MOYLAN of Guam. This legislation will codify the existing Invasive Species Strike Teams program currently operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). These specialized teams play an essential role in managing emerging invasive species, employing strategies tailored to local conditions across the National Wildlife Refuge System. With 21 teams strategically positioned in various FWS regions, they are on the front lines, addressing the unique challenges posed by invasive species.

The Invasive Species Response Act signifies a transformative shift within the FWS, moving us from a reactive, species-by-species approach to a more strategic, system-wide framework for managing emerging invasive species. Key provisions of the bill include formally establishing the Invasive Species Strike Teams program, which will create a stable and legally supported framework to ensure consistent funding and enhance our management efforts. The act also mandates enhanced coordination and reporting through integrated systems and standardized procedures, ensuring transparency and enabling us to track progress with annual reports to Congress and the public. Furthermore, it authorizes \$15 million annually from Fiscal Year 2025 through 2029, aligning with current FWS investment levels to support ongoing initiatives.

This legislation is a crucial step forward in protecting our natural resources and enhancing our capacity to respond swiftly to the threats posed by invasive species.

I urge my colleagues to lend their support to our Invasive Species Response Act. Together, we can ensure the preservation of our ecosystems and promote a resilient future for our environment.