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**SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF MARION
LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL'S BOYS 4 X
400 METER RELAY TEAM FOR
WINNING THE DIVISION III
STATE TRACK AND FIELD TITLE**

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to pay a very special tribute to an outstanding high school track and field relay team in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. The young men of the Marion Local High School Boys 4 x 400 Meter Relay team have represented their school ably on their way to achieving the Division III State Track and Field Title. The team overcame the challenges posed by intense competition in their effort to surpass all other relay teams in their event.

In pursuing the State Championship, Oliver Huelsman, Justin Knouff, Andrew Pohlman, and Victor Hoelscher defeated their outstanding competitors to win with an impressive time of 3:21.06. The members of this very special team have shown that their sport requires an individual effort for a team result. Their hard work and dedication, both on and off the track, in achieving this accomplishment should be commended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Marion Local High Boys 4 x 400 Meter Relay team. On behalf of the people of the Fifth District of Ohio, I am proud to recognize this great achievement.

HONORING JOSIE MOTA GOMEZ

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Josie Mota Gomez, a visionary in education, lifelong advocate for youth, and social justice. For more than three decades, Josie has been a pillar of the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, her hometown.

Josie's journey began on a snowy day in February 1975, when she arrived in New York City from the Dominican Republic to reunite with her mother, Melida, who labored for years in a factory to provide a better future for her children. That act of sacrifice would leave an indelible mark on Josie, instilling in her the values of strength, perseverance and service. Accordingly, she began her formal education

at Our Savior School in Williamsburg, learning English and discovering the value of community in a building that would later become home to El Puente Academy—the very school she would help shape decades later.

After attending the High School of Fashion Industries, Josie pursued her passion for communication and earned a degree in Speech Communications from Pace University. A brief stint in the corporate world left her unfulfilled—but a chance meeting with El Puente co-founders Dr. Frances Lucerna and Luis Garden-Acosta changed everything. In 1991, she joined El Puente as a community liaison, launching a lifelong commitment to youth, education, and social justice.

In 1993, Josie played a critical role in the founding of the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, the first public high school in the country centered on human rights and social justice. She has served the school for 32 of its 34-year history—guiding students, families, and fellow educators through every transition and triumph. Her leadership has shaped the Academy's identity, grounded in the belief that we are not just here to study history, but to make history.

Along the way, she earned a master's in education from Long Island University and a bilingual counseling license from Brooklyn College, yet she has always been defined not by titles, but by the deep relationships she has built. Josie walks with young people and their families, lifting them up, meeting them where they are, and helping them believe in their own power.

El Puente is not just a workplace for Josie—it is her family. Her four children were raised in its community, and her unwavering presence has come to symbolize its mission. Josie's journey is a testament to the immigrant experience rooted in sacrifice, shaped by resilience and driven by the hope of a better future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Josie Mota Gomez on this special occasion of her retirement. I extend my deepest gratitude for her public service and wish her joy in this next chapter of life.

**HONORING AND REMEMBERING
THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO
PASSED AWAY IN A PLANE
CRASH IN HOWLAND TOWNSHIP,
OHIO**

HON. MICHAEL A. RULLI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Mr. RULLI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the victims of the June 29, 2025, plane crash in Howland Township, Ohio, that claimed six lives.

This tragic loss has taken beloved family members and respected professionals who contributed significantly to the Mahoning Valley. Their influence on the community will endure for generations.

James Weller was the President and CEO of Liberty Steel Industries Inc., a staple of our Warren, Ohio. His passion for his faith and his family inspired him to treat others with respect and dignity.

Veronica Weller, James's wife, was a loving wife, mother, sister, aunt, and friend, making

the community around her a better place. Veronica's involvement with charities showed her true devotion to those in need.

John Weller, son of James and Veronica Weller, was known for his humor and positive outlook on life, spreading love and positivity to those who knew him. John Weller was the vice president of Liberty Steel Industries.

Maria Weller, John's wife, was a volunteer at the St. Edward's food pantry, showing her dedication and love for the community that she sought to make better. Maria's creation of a fashion camp designed to help STEM students showed her willingness to give her time and energy to serve others.

Joseph Maxin, the pilot of the airplane, used his enthusiasm for public service to positively touch the hearts and minds of those he interacted with. Joseph's service in the Youngstown Prosecutor's Office showed his desire and eagerness to keep his community safe.

Timothy Blake, the co-pilot of the airplane, used his fondness for aviation to train the next generation of pilots at Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring and remembering those who lost their lives in this tragic incident.

**HONORING FRIENDSHIP AFRICAN
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI**

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate a remarkable institution of faith, history, and service: Friendship African Methodist Episcopal Church in Clarksdale, Mississippi. For more than a century and a half, Friendship AME Church has stood as a steadfast pillar of spiritual leadership, community empowerment, and social justice.

Founded in 1869 by Reverend Thomas W. Stringer, one of the pioneering leaders of the AME Church in Mississippi, Friendship AME has served not only as a sanctuary of worship but as a beacon of hope and advocacy in the Clarksdale community. The land upon which the church was first built was generously given by John Clark, the founder of Clarksdale, and it became home to the first school for Black children in the area—underscoring its early commitment to education and equality.

During the turbulent years of the Civil Rights Movement, Friendship AME provided refuge and became a center for organizing efforts that sought to dismantle segregation and promote justice. It welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Jesse Jackson, and countless other leaders who rallied the community and inspired a generation toward action and faith.

The church's legacy is not only etched in the lives it has changed but also in its architecture—through its red brick Gothic Revival sanctuary and the historic Colonial Revival Haven United Methodist Church, which together symbolize resilience and sacred tradition.

Despite enduring hardships, including a devastating fire, the congregation rebuilt the

church through faith and unity. Now located at 120 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Friendship AME Church remains a testament to perseverance—where, as members say, “The building is historic, but the Church is eternal.”

Under the dedicated leadership of Rev. Darren Thomas, II, the church continues to minister to the spiritual and social needs of its members and neighbors. Pastor Thomas reminds us that the enduring legacy of Friendship AME is rooted in the power of faith, hard work, and unity—a legacy that calls on us all to help build a brighter future for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Friendship African Methodist Episcopal Church for its monumental contributions to faith, education, civil rights, and community uplift. As we celebrate a century and a half years of unwavering service, may we honor its past, embrace its present, and support its mission for years to come.

CELEBRATING DJ ROBERTS AND THE LAWSON AND ROBERTS FAMILIES

HON. PETE STAUBER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor DJ Roberts, a soon-to-be deputy sheriff from Itasca County in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District, who will be reclaiming his grandfather Robert “Beefy” Lawson's badge number 703 and carrying forward a legacy of heroic service.

Beefy Lawson was a beloved figure. A Korean War veteran, a talented hockey player and referee, and a deputy sheriff whose charisma and selflessness touched countless lives. He was a pillar of our community. Tragically, he was killed in the line of duty, leaving a void in his family and community.

Inspired by his grandfather's example, DJ Roberts has pursued a path of service with remarkable courage. Despite a dyslexia diagnosis, DJ transitioned from a 20-year career in construction to become a corrections officer at the Itasca County Sheriffs Office in 2018. In 2023, DJ bravely returned to school in his 40s to pursue his dream of becoming a road deputy, overcoming mental, emotional, and physical challenges while balancing fatherhood to four children and his duties as a husband.

Today, we celebrate DJ, known to his late grandfather as “Buddy Guy,” for being honored with Beefy Lawson's badge number as a powerful symbol of his commitment to public safety and a full-circle moment for the Lawson and Roberts family. With resilience, integrity, quiet heroism, and strong faith in God, DJ honors his grandfather's memory, inspiring our community by continuing a legacy of service and sacrifice.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF ISABELLA ZAHN FOR WINNING THE DIVISION III STATE TRACK AND FIELD TITLE FOR THE 200 METER DASH, 400 METER DASH, AND LONG JUMP

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to pay a very special tribute to an outstanding high school athlete from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. Isabella Zahn, a senior at Coldwater High School, has represented her school ably on her way to achieving three Division III State Titles for the 200 Meter Dash, 400 Meter Dash, and Girls Long Jump at the State Track and Field Meet. Anna overcame the challenges posed by intense competition in her effort to win the title.

In pursuing the State Championship, Anna defeated her opponents with an impressive time of 23.04 seconds in the 200 Meter Dash, 54.56 seconds in the 400 Meter Dash, and a jump of 18–08.50 in the Girls Long Jump. Her hard work and dedication, both on and off the track, in achieving this accomplishment is truly outstanding. She has achieved an impressive season, bringing pride to her school and community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to Isabella Zahn of Coldwater High School. On behalf of the people of the Fifth District of Ohio, I am proud to recognize this great achievement.

HONORING SCOTT ACONE

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Scott Acone, as he retires from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Scott first began what would be an extensive career with the New England District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as an intern in 1988. Following the internship, Scott took on a full-time role as a hydraulic engineer with the Water Control Branch, where he performed critical hydrologic and hydraulic analyses for project planning and design, while also taking on the responsibility of managing the New England District's Periodic Inspection Program for dams and hurricane barriers. During this time, Scott became the New England District's expert on ice engineering, responding to numerous ice jam events throughout the 1990s.

In 1999, Scott transitioned to a project management role, where his leadership skills quickly proved to be an asset. As a project manager, and later as Chief of the Military and Environmental Project Management Branch starting in 2010, Scott oversaw several projects that received significant recognition, including the Eastland Woolen Mill Superfund Site, which was awarded both the 2003 National Honor Award for Engineering Excellence from the American Council of Engineering Companies and the 2004 Build America Award for Environmental Remediation from

the Associated General Contractors of America.

In 2013, Scott was promoted to Chief of the Engineering and Planning Division, where he led 140 technical and administrative professionals in planning water resource, environmental, and military projects across New England. Scott was later named Chief of the Programs and Project Management Division in 2016. In this role, Scott oversaw an annual budget of \$500 million in projects across USACE's business lines.

Throughout his career, Scott contributed to many notable projects, including the Elizabeth Mine Superfund Site in Vermont and the Central Artery and Tunnel Stem to Stern Safety Review of the Big Dig Project. Scott's efforts also extended beyond U.S. borders when he provided engineering oversight and review to the Millennium Challenge Corporation for the rehabilitation and raising of the Nacala Dam, an earthen dam in Mozambique, to provide additional clean drinking water to the region.

An engineering professional committed to improving infrastructure throughout New England, Scott is a graduate of the USACE North Atlantic Division's Executive Leadership Development Program and is a member of the USACE North Atlantic Division Regional Management Board and the Society of American Military Engineers. Scott has been awarded several awards recognizing his efforts, including the Joint Civilian Service Achievement Award and the Superior Civilian Service Award.

In addition to Scott's assigned duties and responsibilities with the New England District, Scott volunteered and lent his knowledge and expertise to the USACE's emergency management office to help those devastated in the aftermath of disasters. Scott was deployed many times, including as part of the urban search and rescue team that responded to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the urban search and rescue team that responded to Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, Scott assisted the USACE's response team following the attacks on 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

After three and a half decades of service, Scott will retire from the New England District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the end of June. Scott has diligently served the people of New England, and I wish him many years of well-deserved happiness in retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Scott Acone, and I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing Scott's career and thanking him for his years of service.

HONORING STAN BAKER

HON. BECCA BALINT

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Ms. BALINT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of the Venerable J. Stannard “Stan” Baker, who passed away on June 23, 2025, at the age of 79. A devoted deacon in the Episcopal Church and a pioneering advocate for LGBTQI+ rights, Stan's impact on our Nation and on the Commonwealth of Vermont will endure for generations.

Ordained in 2009, Stan served with distinction as Archdeacon of the Episcopal Diocese