

recipient of the Olympiad Student Athlete Award. For seven years, Adelina has competed for Bridgeton High School with excellence and distinction—beginning with interscholastic middle school sports and continuing into a celebrated high school career filled with accolades and honors. But Adelina's achievements extend far beyond the athletic arena. She has maintained a GPA above 3.7 throughout her high school years, reflecting a strong commitment to academic excellence alongside her competitive spirit. Adelina brings a rare and powerful combination to every endeavor—a kind and friendly demeanor, a sharp wit, and an unwavering drive to succeed. She has consistently represented her school, her community, and above all, her family, with pride and honor. Supported by a strong foundation at home and guided by her own inner discipline, Adelina has become a role model for young athletes in South Jersey. I congratulate Adelina, on receiving the Olympiad Award, and thank her for inspiring those around her through her dedication and character. God bless Adelina Wilks, and God bless the United States of America, the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND  
ACHIEVEMENTS OF MASTER  
SERGEANT STEVEN WILLIAMS

**HON. LLOYD SMUCKER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate and recognize Master Sergeant Steven Williams for his appointment as the 41st Drum Major of "The President's Own" Marine Band.

Master Sergeant Williams, a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, graduated from Lampeter-Strasburg High School. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2002, where he attended recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in Beaufort, South Carolina. He later attended Marine Combat Training and the basic course at the Armed Forces School of Music in Little Creek, Virginia, as a trumpet player. From January to September 2005, he was deployed to the Al Anbar Province in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

Prior to joining "The President's Own", he was stationed with the 2D Marine Division Band at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. He became Assistant Drum Major for "The President's Own" in April 2013, where he assisted in leading the band in ceremonial duties and oversaw unit training. As Drum Major, Master Sergeant Williams directs "The President's Own" in its duties, which include performing at ceremonies such as the inaugural parade, and reviews for the President, heads of State, and dignitaries.

I want to thank and congratulate Master Sergeant Williams for his invaluable service to our country at home and abroad, and for his appointment as 41st Drum Major of "The President's Own." I wish him continued success in his military service and further pursuits.

CELEBRATING U.S. GRADUATES OF  
THE LATIN AMERICAN SCHOOL  
OF MEDICINE (ELAM)

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend exceptional commitment of the 2025 graduating class from the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba. These eleven courageous and compassionate individuals are now part of a legacy of global medical solidarity that began 25 years ago when Cuba offered full scholarships to students from underserved communities around the world, including the United States.

In partnership with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), the U.S. ELAM program has graduated 245 physicians since its inception. Many of these graduates come from communities that have historically been denied access to medical education. These individuals have chosen a career path focused on service rather than profit, prioritizing community health over personal comfort. Currently, 101 graduates are making significant contributions to public health across various fields, including integrative medicine, research, education, and nonprofit work. Additionally, 144 graduates are either fully licensed or participating in residency programs in over 30 U.S. States, with many practicing in areas designated as health professional shortage areas or medically underserved communities.

Seventy percent of the program's graduates are women, and eighty percent are Black and Brown, reflecting the diversity of the broader student body at the school as a whole.

These graduates faced unique challenges, including studying medicine in a second language, adapting to a different healthcare system, and navigating the geopolitical impacts of the U.S. blockade on Cuba. Despite these obstacles, they persisted. Their achievements are not just academic; they are also profoundly political, demonstrating what is possible when healthcare and medical education are recognized as fundamental human rights.

Mr. Speaker, during a time when our healthcare system struggles with racial and economic disparities, these doctors remind us that another model is possible—one founded on equity, internationalism, and public service.

On behalf of Mississippi's Second Congressional District, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the U.S. ELAM Class of 2025. May their work continue to heal, inspire, and remind us that solidarity can indeed save lives.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BILL HUIZENGA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in regard to missed votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 191; YEA on Roll Call No. 192; and YEA on Roll Call No. 193.

RECOGNIZING EMILY KUKAL

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to highlight the remarkable accomplishments of Emily Kukal, a standout student-athlete from my district and recipient of the Olympiad Student Athlete Award. Emily has been a shining example of excellence at Millville High School—both in the classroom and in competition. With a remarkable 4.8 GPA, she ranks second in a class of over 400 students, having completed eight Advanced Placement courses and earned numerous academic honors. She is also a proud member of the National Honor Society. On the athletic field, Emily has been just as impressive, earning eight varsity letters across three sports: soccer, swimming, and golf. Her ability to balance such high-level academics with outstanding athletic achievement speaks to her dedication, discipline, and character. Emily is not only an accomplished student and athlete—she is a future leader. Her talents and strong work ethic will no doubt continue to shine as she begins the next chapter of her journey at the United States Coast Guard Academy this fall. I thank Emily, for choosing a path of service to our Nation, and I have every confidence she will make an extraordinary officer and continue to make South Jersey proud. I congratulate Emily, and thank her for representing Millville and my entire district, with such great pride. God bless Emily and God bless our United States of America, the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

CONGRATULATING THE EAST PAL-  
ESTINE FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR  
150 YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. MICHAEL A. RULLI**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. RULLI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the East Palestine Fire Department, a pillar of our beloved Ohio community since 1875. It is a privilege to honor these firefighters who have dedicated themselves to keeping our village safe.

For 150 years, these brave men and women have put their lives on the line, responding to countless emergencies with unwavering courage. Beyond their role as first responders, they connect with our community daily and strengthen the bonds that make East Palestine a special place in which to live.

I also want to recognize their heroism during the 2023 train derailment. When disaster struck, with flames and toxic hazards threatening our village, they stepped up with incredible bravery. Their actions that night, and in the days that followed, will be remembered for generations to come.

The East Palestine Fire Department stands as a symbol of hope and resilience, meeting new challenges and staying true to their mission. Their work embodies the spirit of East Palestine, and I am proud to represent them.

I invite my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring the East Palestine Fire Department for

150 years of exemplary service and to wish them continued strength and success for many years to come.

HONORING W. DOUGLAS HOWLAND  
FOR HIS SERVICE

**HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Mr. W. Douglas Howland a happy 101st birthday and to thank him for his years of service to his country and his community.

Douglas enlisted after graduating from high school in 1942 and served in the Navy in World War II. For more than 3 and a half years, Douglas served on the aircraft carrier Essex in the Pacific as a radioman on a dive bomber. To this day, Douglas often shares stories of his time during World War II and expresses great pride in having served his country.

Beyond his service to his country, Douglas has been a leader in his community in several ways. Following his time in the Navy, Douglas attended St. Lawrence University, working part time on the railroad to provide for his family. After graduating from St. Lawrence University, Douglas continued to be an active member of his community. From 1962 to 1987, Douglas was a supervisor for the 9th Ward in the City of Watertown. After serving 25 years on the Board of Supervisors of Jefferson County, Douglas became Chairman of the Board in 1984 and was involved in the expansion of Fort Drum. Douglas was also president of the North Side Improvement League in the 1960s, during which he emphasized the value of education which manifested through the important role he played in the establishment of Jefferson Community College. After its establishment, Douglas joined the Board of Trustees for the college.

Douglas is also an active member in the Elks Club, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. At 100 years old, Douglas remains sharp and curious, eager to stay up to date on current events and follow elected officials on both a local and national scale. Douglas has lived an extraordinary and admirable life, always dedicated to serving those around him and being a leader to others.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I am honored and excited to celebrate W. Douglas Howland's 101st birthday and I thank him for his brave service in the Navy as well as the years of public service that followed.

RECOGNIZING THE BIRTHDAY OF  
WILBERT D. PAYNE, JR.

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the birthday of Wilbert D. Payne, Jr. Mr. Payne turned 75 on July 13th.

Mr. Payne was born on July 13, 1950, and has devoted almost 50 years to serving his

community and country, becoming a historic figure in the City of Opelika and a respected voice among Alabama veterans and civic leaders. In 2016, he made history as the first African American elected Chairman of the City of Opelika Board of Zoning Adjustments, breaking barriers and fostering inclusive representation for the citizens of Opelika.

On February 17, 1970, Mr. Payne was drafted into the United States Army at the age of 19, serving with valor in the Vietnam War and later continuing his service through the U.S. Army Reserve and the Army National Guard until his medical retirement in 2004.

As former Commander of the Disabled American Veterans Twin Cities Chapter 95, he spearheaded the Vietnam War 50-Year Commemoration in Central Alabama, organizing the first ceremony of its kind in Lee County in 2016 and ensuring hundreds of veterans were honored and presented with commemorative pins and the public gratitude they had long deserved. He became an advocate for veterans' rights, mental health care, and public recognition for Vietnam veterans who, like himself, returned home without fanfare or acknowledgment.

His civic service roles include: Chief Voting Inspector for Lee County at the Covington Recreation Center, Chairman and member of the City of Opelika Zoning Board, Member of 100 Black Men of America, Inc., Greater Auburn-Opelika Chapter, where he served as All Pro Dad's Chairperson for Carver Primary School and West Forest Intermediate School, Longtime coordinator of the Lions Tamers Social and Civic Club's Family Fun Day/Juneteenth Celebration, Certified Member and Volunteer with the American Red Cross for 19 years, including service as a former Shelter Manager on the Disaster Action Team (DAT), Board Member of the Greater Peace Church Community Development Corporation, Facilities Coordinator for the J.W. Darden Foundation, Member of the Opelika-Auburn News Editorial Board, Board Member of the Lee-Russell County Council on Aging, Active with People of Action for Community Enrichment and recipient of the Arthur Hill Community Service Award (2023).

Mr. Payne retired from the City of Opelika Engineering Department (1990 to 2000) after previous employment with the Augusta Environmental Company (1981 to 1989) and Diversified Products (1976 to 1980), while balancing his long and honorable military service in U.S. Army (1970 to 1971) and Army Reserve (1971 to 2000). He is supported by his loving wife, BBB4 Wilbert D. Payne, Jr., and has been blessed with 4 children and 12 grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Mr. Payne on this milestone and wishing him a very happy birthday.

RECOGNIZING SPECIALIST  
WILLIAMS MARES

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of speaking about Major Steven Mares, and now I want to talk about the bravery of his youngest son, Specialist William

Mares. William is a senior at Central Regional High School, where he serves with distinction as the Cadet Battalion Commander of the school's Junior ROTC program, the Golden Eagle Battalion. Recently, William followed in his father's footsteps by enlisting in the U.S. Armed Forces. He will soon begin basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the very same base where his father trained. After that, he will be stationed in Arizona, the place he was born when his father was based there, a powerful full-circle moment that speaks to the deep military tradition within the Mares family. William has also been accepted to begin advanced individual training at the Defense Language Institute, where he will spend 18 months studying Arabic. Upon completing his training, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in linguistics and continue his journey in the U.S. Army, proudly walking the same path of service and excellence his father has traveled. William's ambition, discipline, and devotion to his country are truly inspiring, and I have no doubt that his future is bright and filled with purpose. May God bless William and God bless our United States of America, the greatest country on the face of the planet.

RECOGNIZING BECKY KOENIG

**HON. RANDY FEENSTRA**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 15, 2025*

Mr. FEENSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Becky Koenig and congratulate her on her retirement after nearly 40 years in education.

Since 1984, Becky has invested in the education of generations of Iowans across the communities of Sumner, Forest City, Lake Park, and Spencer. Her leadership and dedication to the classroom have left a lasting impact on each student, teacher, and faculty member that has had the pleasure of working, teaching, and learning alongside her.

In addition to teaching, Becky has spent 38 years as a speech coach, guiding students in competition. As a head coach, she contributed to Spencer High School's 50-year streak of sending at least one group to the Iowa All-State Festival.

Outside of the classroom, Becky was known to be a tireless advocate for her fellow educators and students, a true leader. As an Instructional Mentor Coach, she formally mentored many teachers and informally guided countless others with the years of experience and wisdom she accrued.

Becky was one of those educators who had a lasting impact not just on her students' education, but on their lives. Students from the past still reach out to her to chat, grab lunch, and thank her for the role she played in their formative years. She has inspired thousands of Iowans with her work, leaving a legacy that colleagues will look fondly back upon and future educators will look towards as a model for their careers.

As she begins this next chapter in her life, I would like to thank Becky for the incredible work she has done for the state of Iowa—and our great Nation. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Becky Koenig for a remarkable career and wishing her all the best in retirement.