

support police and first responders in several counties throughout the First Congressional District.

The work of organizations such as Operation We Care is incredibly meaningful and important to our military and first responders. I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Merritt for supporting those in our community that work to keep us safe at home and abroad.

I wish Mr. and Mrs. Merritt the best of luck in continuing their efforts to make Maryland's First Congressional District better in every way.

CELEBRATING THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS' BICENTENNIAL

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 200th anniversary of the City of Washington, Illinois, a proud and resilient community I am honored to represent.

Founded in 1825 by blacksmith William Holland, Washington began as Hollands Grove and was renamed in 1837 to honor President George Washington. The city quickly grew, electing its first town president in 1839, officially incorporating in 1857, and reorganizing as a city in 1878 with Peter Fifer as its first mayor.

Washington holds a strong connection to Abraham Lincoln, who visited often while traveling the Tenth Judicial Circuit. In 1857, he defended two residents accused of helping escaped slaves along the Underground Railroad, marking a powerful moment in the city's history.

Washington later gained national recognition through George Heyl's pony farm, home to champion Shetland ponies including King Larigo and Creations King. The original barns still stand on North Main Street as a tribute to that chapter.

The city's strength was tested in 2013, when a powerful EF-4 tornado destroyed more than one thousand structures and took the lives of three residents. In the aftermath, the people of Washington came together with courage and compassion, rebuilding stronger than ever.

Today, Washington is home to more than 16,000 residents. The city has become a destination for visitors who annually flock to its Good Neighbor Days festival in the spring and to the quaint locally owned businesses occupying century-old buildings lining its historic downtown square.

I congratulate the City of Washington on its bicentennial and commend its citizens for carrying forward a legacy of perseverance, service, and pride. I look forward to its continued success in the years ahead.

HONORING WYNNNTON HILL BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Wynnton Hill Baptist Church. The

Church celebrated its 164th Anniversary on August 24, 2025, with a service at the church located at 2620 Buena Vista Road in Columbus, Georgia.

Wynnton Hill Baptist Church, established in 1861, proudly stands as the first church of any denomination in the Wynnton area of Columbus, Georgia and the second oldest predominantly African American Church in the Muscogee/Chattahoochee Valley Area. Driven by a deep yearning to create a fellowship for the glory of God through Jesus Christ, a small group of dedicated believers came together under the guidance of Reverend Phillip Owens. They gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie and Sarah James to lay the foundation of this spiritual community.

Reverend Owens, who became the first pastor, led the church during its formative years. The congregation demonstrated exceptional commitment by building a bush arbor on land that the church purchased from the James family, using fresh bushes from nearby woodlands for their Saturday gatherings. The church quickly grew, with many souls coming to faith.

The church's first wooden structure served as a worship center, and under Pastor Owens—who served an astounding 47 years—the church flourished. Wynnton Hill has become a testament to the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ, having faced various trials yet overcoming them through faith.

Throughout its 164 years, Wynnton Hill has maintained a legacy of resilience, even amidst challenges and disagreements. The church has birthed three other assemblies—Greater Peace, New Mt. Zion, and Blessed Assurance Baptist Churches—emphasizing the unifying power of the gospel.

Wynnton Hill has been shepherded by numerous dedicated pastors, with Reverend Owens as the longest serving, followed by several other esteemed leaders to include Samuel Daniels, R.T. Lewis, H.H. Hunter, Dr. James H. Carter, Dr. Van J. Malone, F.L. Williams, Dr. R.C. Gates, Robert L. Evans, Dr. Bruce Alford, and Dr. Kenneth Cyrus, who all contributed to the church's growth and community involvement. Several Pastors led the church during periods of transition as Interim Pastors to include Reverend Joe Sales, Reverend Tommy Holston, and Dr. Charles McAfee.

Over the years, many sons and daughters of the House of Wynnton have been licensed to preach the gospel and have gone on to have significant impacts in communities across the Chattahoochee Valley Area and beyond to include Oliver Holston, Tommy Holston, Robert Holston, Robert Evans, Evoucous Thomas, Charles Milton, Isaac Whitfield, Paul Milton, Lewis McCants, James Love, David Holston, Michael David, Carlton Dawson, Artie Johnson, Charlene Dawson, Doris Wade, Eulas Wade and Roy Evans.

Significant milestones include the construction of the first brick building in 1930 that would later house the first public school for African Americans in the basement. The first Education wing was built in 1951. During this time, the Church became a leader in the community in advocating for civil rights and social justice. In 1989, the educational wing was firebombed and destroyed. But the Lord blessed the church to be able to rebuild and dedicate a new wing in 1990. In the same year, the Lord Blessed the Church with a new

sanctuary. The old sanctuary was dedicated as a fellowship hall and named after Pastor J.H. Carter.

In more recent years, under the leadership of Pastor Michael W. Sherman, who has served as Pastor since 2015, the church has embraced technology for worship and has actively engaged in community outreach, including Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas toy drives, and educational initiatives. Pastor Sherman with support of his congregation and supportive First Lady, Alma Taylor Sherman, understands that the ministry of Jesus Christ must be expanded beyond the church walls.

Wynnton Hill Baptist Church remains committed to its mission; to evangelize, educate, and edify in the light of Jesus Christ. As the church continues to shine as a beacon of hope, it looks forward to fulfilling the Great Commission and changing lives both now and in future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, along with my wife, Vivian and the more 765,000 people of the 2nd Congressional District in honoring Wynnton Hill Baptist Church on its 164th Church Anniversary.

May the blessings of the Lord be upon Wynnton Hill Baptist Church as it continues this sacred journey to bring souls to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

HONORING LARRY STOKES

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the late Larry Stokes, who passed away on July 10, 2025.

Dr. Stokes was a well-respected and beloved professor at Savannah State University. He dedicated his life to education and influenced countless students during his tenure at the University.

Because of his unwavering commitment, Dr. Stokes will be fondly remembered for his contributions to academia. He is also known for fostering a love of learning within his classroom and amongst students.

His life was marked by his marriage to The Honorable Judge Tammy Tokes, whom he met and married in 2002. Their relationship is often described as a testament to love, mutual respect, and shared values. Together, they created a loving home for their two children, Kendall and McKenzie.

Dr. Stokes also took immense pride in being a grandfather and greatly cherished the memories with his loved ones.

Today, I ask that we all take a moment to remember Dr. Stokes' legacy of knowledge, kindness, and compassion.

SUPPORTING THE PARTNER ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the PARTNER Act, introduced by Congressman CASTRO of Texas, and cosponsored by myself and seven of our colleagues who

are particularly invested in advancing our country's relationships with crucial international organizations.

This bill extends diplomatic privileges and immunities to five multilateral organizations. I am grateful that Congressman CASTRO included a section from my Pacific Partnership Act, which extends diplomatic privileges and immunities to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the region's premier multilateral organization with eighteen members across Oceania, in the hopes that the PIF will establish a mission to the U.S.

Scattered across the three traditional Pacific subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia are over two dozen jurisdictions collectively known as the Pacific Islands, including twelve independent states, countries in free association and territories. Though small in land area and population, the land plus maritime exclusive economic zones of all these jurisdictions combined exceed the land areas of China and Russia combined, comprising a significant part of the vast Pacific Ocean and our Earth's surface.

The Pacific Islands region remains critical to our national security interests in the Indo-Pacific and advises greater U.S. engagement to advance our shared interests and values, particularly in the context of growing geopolitical competition and threats by our shared adversaries to endanger the pursuit of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to sustain and expand U.S. engagement in this critical region.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JUDGE EDMUNDO B. GARCIA, JR.

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Judge Edmundo B. Garcia, Jr., a devoted husband, father, public servant, and community leader from San Diego, Texas.

Born in 1936, Judge Garcia dedicated his life to education and public service. For 32 years, he served the San Diego Independent School District as a teacher and administrator, shaping the lives of countless students.

He later went on to serve as Duval County Judge from 1995 until his retirement in 2006, and again as Interim Judge in 2022, earning the respect and trust of his community.

Beyond public office, Judge Garcia was a proud U.S. Army veteran, a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus, and an active member of the San Diego Rotary Club and the Sociedad Católica Mutualista. His civic leadership extended to board service, including the First State Bank of San Diego, and he will be fondly remembered as "the voice" of the San Diego Fighting Vaqueros.

Judge Garcia's legacy is rooted in faith, family, and service. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Rosa Maria, his children, grandchildren, great-granddaughter, and a grateful community.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Garcia lived a life defined by devotion to God, family, and the people of Duval County. Let us be inspired by his legacy.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA POLICE HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Police Home Rule Act, which would repeal section 740 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act (HRA). Section 740 allows the president, in the case of an emergency, to direct the D.C. mayor to provide the president the services of D.C.'s police department, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), for federal purposes. Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN is the sponsor of this bill in the Senate.

Under the HRA, "whenever the President . . . determines that special conditions of an emergency nature exist which require the use of the MPD for Federal purposes, he may direct the Mayor to provide him, and the Mayor shall provide, such services of the MPD as the President may deem necessary and appropriate" for 30 days, unless Congress terminates or extends the emergency declaration.

On August 11, 2025, President Trump declared a crime emergency in D.C. pursuant to section 740, even though violent crime reached a more than 30-year low in D.C. in 2024 and is down 27 percent this year compared to the same period last year. President Trump is the first president to invoke section 740, but his invocation is unlawful. While one crime is too many, there is no emergency or federal purpose that allowed President Trump to invoke section 740.

Section 740 is inconsistent with the main purpose of the HRA, which is to "grant to the inhabitants of the District of Columbia powers of local self-government." Giving the president the power to direct the services of MPD is a violation of D.C. home rule. MPD's first responsibility is to protect D.C. residents and visitors, and it must always remain under the authority of the D.C. mayor, who knows D.C. better than the president, to accomplish its mission.

Section 740 is also unnecessary. In the case of a true federal emergency in D.C., the president can deploy federal law enforcement officers and the Armed Forces, and can request the support of MPD, as the Capitol Police did during the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, and as the Federal government does on a regular basis.

At my request, the House's fiscal year 2022 and 2023 D.C. appropriations bills blocked the president from carrying out section 740.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING TOM COUSINS

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Tom Cousins.

Tom Cousins was one of the most influential figures in Georgia's history, transforming Atlanta into one of the Nation's leading cities.

At just 16, he enrolled at the University of Georgia, earning a degree in finance and graduating in the top ten percent of his class. After graduation, he served in the United States Air Force, rising to the rank of First Lieutenant.

Following his service, he founded a real estate company with his father, becoming the largest homebuilder in Georgia.

Tom later purchased key properties in downtown Atlanta and was instrumental in relocating the St. Louis Hawks to the city.

Beyond business, he led the East Lake revitalization project, turning the neighborhood into a thriving urban community.

His vision and leadership left an enduring mark on Georgia and its capital.

Today, we remember Tom Cousins for his extraordinary contributions.

HONORING SEAMAN JKHARIA JEFFERSON FOR HER SERVICE IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend an outstanding young Mississippian, Seaman Jkharia Jefferson, for her admirable service in the United States Navy.

A native of Yazoo City, Mississippi, Seaman Jefferson serves aboard the USS *John C. Stennis*, a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier currently operating out of Newport News, Virginia. As one of the largest warships in the world, the *John C. Stennis* represents the strength, commitment, and global reach of America's naval power—and Seaman Jefferson is proudly contributing to that mission.

A 2024 graduate of Yazoo City High School, Seaman Jefferson exemplifies the values of discipline, dedication, and resilience instilled by her community. Reflecting on her journey, she credits her mentors and family—particularly her mother, Koashecal, and mentors Col. Robert A. Avery (Ret.) and Charles Weathersby—for shaping her mindset and encouraging her pursuit of a career in the military.

The Navy is celebrating its 250th birthday this year, marking a quarter-millennium of steadfast service to our Nation and commitment to the security of maritime commerce and freedom of navigation. With 90 percent of global commerce moving by sea, and our digital infrastructure depending on secure under-sea cables, our Navy's mission has never been more critical.

Aircraft carriers like the *John C. Stennis* are self-contained mobile airports, capable of deploying with unmatched speed, endurance, and combat capability. They are often the first to respond to crises, deliver humanitarian aid, and project U.S. presence across the globe.

Seaman Jefferson's story is a testament to courage and perseverance. "My proudest accomplishment so far is getting through boot camp," she said. "Getting through those 10 weeks and coming out stronger is something I am very proud of." As a woman in a male-dominated field, she also recognizes the importance of representation and empowerment, saying, "I hope I can show other females they can do it just as well as any man can."