

Mr. Nelson has transformed public transportation in our region. Under his leadership, MetroLINK became a model of innovation—connecting people to Jobs, education, and opportunity while advancing economic growth, clean energy, and smart technology.

He introduced the Channel Cat water taxi service, which has provided over one million rides, giving residents and visitors a unique way to travel the Mississippi River. He also led the adoption of electric buses, placing the Quad Cities at the forefront of sustainable transit solutions.

His vision and dedication have earned national recognition, including the American Public Transportation Association's Outstanding Public Transportation System Award. Beyond these honors, Mr. Nelson built a system that strengthens the community every day.

I thank Jeff Nelson for his decades of leadership, creativity, and commitment to the Quad Cities, and I extend my best wishes to him in retirement.

HONORING THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF GARFIELD HIGH IN EAST LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the centennial anniversary of Garfield High School located in East Los Angeles.

Since 1925, Garfield has been a cornerstone of the community, providing education and opportunity for generations of students from all walks of life. Garfield's legacy is deeply intertwined with the cultural fabric of Los Angeles, and its tradition of academic, athletic, and artistic success continues to shape California's thriving economic and cultural landscape. I thank all the extraordinary educators and staff of Garfield whose hard work and dedication on behalf of their students reminds us of the impact that education can have not only for their students, but for their communities.

Let today be a time to reflect on the achievements of the past, but also a commitment to the future. Despite new technology and a changing world, I am confident that Garfield will remain committed to fostering public education and community for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Garfield High School on their 100th anniversary. Go Bulldogs.

HONORING THE INVESTITURE OF PRESIDENT ANDRÉS ACEBO, J.D.

HON. LaMONICA McIVER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mrs. McIVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Andrés Acebo, J.D., as the 13th President of New Jersey City University, located in the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey. As the youngest-ever president appointed to a public university in New Jersey, Acebo has made remarkable advancements

during his interim presidency. His innovative approach and commitment to excellence have significantly enhanced the university's impact on the local community and its academic standing. In just two years, Acebo turned NJCU's \$22.7 million deficit into financial stability, achieving its first balanced budget since 2017. His efforts led to significant credit rating upgrades from Moody's and Fitch, and he was named the top influencer in New Jersey higher education by ROI-NJ in May 2024.

Beyond financial accomplishments, Acebo's leadership has propelled NJCU to remarkable heights in social mobility, as the university ranked No. 1 in New Jersey and 10th nationally in CollegeNET's 2023 Social Mobility Index, maintaining that top state ranking and a position in the Top 20 nationally in 2024. This commitment to student success is further reflected in the graduation rates, with 1,667 students earning their degrees in Spring 2024, an impressive 8.2 percent increase in bachelor's degrees from the previous year and an additional 1,544 graduates projected for 2025. He established partnerships with peer institutions, connecting schools that share similar values and agreements, which fostered a larger higher education community. Under Acebo's leadership, NJCU's athletics also benefited positively as he transitioned the program to a new conference with CUNYAC members in 2026.

What an incredible accomplishment and a shining example of New Jersey excellence. I congratulate Andrés. He makes New Jersey proud.

CELEBRATING HABON ABDULLE ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF AYADA LEADS

HON. ILHAN OMAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Ms. OMAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the extraordinary leadership, dedication, and impact of Habon Abdulle. Her incredible and tireless work has empowered new Americans, including many women of color. I wish to specifically honor Ms. Habon Abdulle on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Ayada Leads.

In Somali, "ayada" means "she." True to its name, Ayada Leads is committed to strengthening our democracy and civic participation by advancing women's leadership and highlighting women empowerment as integral to transformative change.

For years, Habon has been a driving force for gender equity, civic engagement, and leadership. Through her unwavering commitment, she has empowered women across various ages, states, and cultures to embrace their leadership potential. As the founder of Ayada Leads, originally known as Women Organizing Women, I know firsthand how committed Habon is to empowering women and guiding them to become strong leaders here in Minnesota and across the country.

Habon has been a trailblazer for civic engagement for more than 25 years. She is a renowned scholar in gender and politics, holding two master's degrees and a Ph.D. She has also conducted research on the cultural and structural barriers against minority women in political spheres. Habon is no stranger to the

challenges women experience in our community. But nevertheless, she continues to guide and educate women to develop their full leadership potential and is a source of inspiration for so many.

I have personally witnessed Habon's devotion and commitment to this work. A friend for many years, she also served as my mentor. She helped me harness my drive and ambition and encouraged me to do everything I could to support my community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Habon Abdulle's incredible contributions to our community, political education and leadership. Her work is a constant reminder of the importance of strengthening our democracy by empowering women.

RECOGNIZING CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

HON. ERIC SORENSEN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mr. SORENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge one of the most cherished organizations in my district and the efforts to continue their storied mission of serving with the greatest care and love. As we know, September is childhood cancer awareness month, so please join me in recognizing OSF HealthCare and their newly named OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois Cancer and Blood Disorders Institute.

This is an incredible milestone for pediatric healthcare in downstate Illinois. Located in Peoria, the institute cares for children with both cancer and blood disorders through world-class, family-centered care.

The OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois is the sole children's hospital in the downstate area that offers the full spectrum of pediatric oncology and hematology care under one roof for children and their families. These services include one of approximately 45 proton beam therapy centers in the United States and the only one serving downstate Illinois families. This allows for highly targeted radiation treatments which reduce side effects and improve long term outcomes for children.

In addition to treating childhood cancers, the hospital is a regional leader in the care of serious blood disorders such as sickle cell disease, hemophilia, and aplastic anemia. Their comprehensive programs cover major steps for care, including diagnosis, treatment, life-long management, and transition to adult care, thus ensuring every patient receives the treatment they need at every stage of life.

Every year, approximately 15,000 children in the United States, 700 in Illinois, are diagnosed with cancer, and countless others live with chronic or life-threatening blood disorders. This includes children as young as only a few months. While we are thankful that survival rates for many pediatric cancers have improved to over 85 percent, cancer remains the leading cause of disease-related death among children, and hematologic conditions continue to require complex, coordinated, and long-term care.

To unite our community in this fight, OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois has also recently launched Paint the Town Gold, an annual community-wide awareness initiative that will

take place every September during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Now an annual downstate tradition, Paint the Town Gold brings together businesses, schools, local governments, and citizens to honor children, inspire hope, and advocate for continued progress in both cancer and blood disorder care.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge the chamber to join me in congratulating OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois Cancer and Blood Disorders Institute on their new name, while applauding their leadership in pediatric cancer and blood disorder care. Likewise, I am happy to recognize Paint the Town Gold as an enduring community tradition in the fight for every child's health.

HONORING THE LIFE AND
MEMORY OF JOSEPH D. PUTNAM

HON. KEVIN MULLIN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and memory of a legendary business and community leader in San Mateo County, California, Joseph D. Putnam, who died peacefully at his home in Woodside on August 11, 2025, at the age of 90.

Born in Gregory, South Dakota, Mr. Putnam was one of six children of Francis and Bertha Putnam. He was raised on his family's farm, where, during the depths of the Depression and the Dustbowl, they carried their water to the house in buckets from a well, their heat was provided by the wood-burning stove in the kitchen, and their light by oil lamp. Their out-house was located behind the house. From a very young age Joe showed his entrepreneurial spirit by trapping minks and selling them to the war department for lining the jackets of bomber pilots in World War II. In those early years, he also developed the skill of western riding as he spent many hours with his beloved horse.

When in high school, Mary Lou Kayl set her sights on the smartest boy in school, and Joe was the unwitting beneficiary of her plan. After they married a couple of years later, he started his career selling used cars in Minneapolis. Mary Lou was employed with Braniff Airlines, which enabled the young couple to honeymoon in Brazil. Thus began a lifelong quest to jointly explore the world.

When Mary Lou gave birth to their first child, Joe had to work double-time to sell three cars in one day so that he could afford to pay the hospital bill and bring them home. That ambition drove him year-round, as their family grew to six children and Joe made the leap from selling used cars in the Dakotas and Minnesota, to buying a dealership in Burlingame, California. Through grit, smarts, and long hours at work, Joe developed a very successful business, Putnam Auto Dealerships. The business has grown from one dealership to thirteen, selling seventeen brands around the San Francisco Bay Area in Burlingame, San Mateo, Redwood City, San Carlos, and Oakland.

Joe was a mentor and friend to many over the years managing his automobile dealerships. Well known for his radio ads on KCBS in the 70's and 80's—"bring your wife or hus-

band, your pink slip and your check book"—he leaves behind a legacy of family-friendly values and excellent customer service.

Joe and Mary Lou were married for 54 years and created a dynamic life together, centered always on family while being active in the Catholic Church and in charitable activity throughout the community. They were a generous, tireless, formidable couple. Mary Lou predeceased Joe by eighteen years.

Outside of family and work, Joe's lifelong passion was horses. A skilled western horseman, he won many cutting competitions across the west and rode with his good friends at the Mounted Patrol of San Mateo County. In 1998 Joe was awarded Outstanding Horseperson-Citizen of the Year by the Mounted Patrol. His children grew up in Woodside riding their horses after school the way other kids ride their bikes.

Mr. Putnam leaves a proud legacy of community engagement and service, values instilled in his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. A self-made family man who lived and embodied the American dream, Mr. Putnam will always be remembered for his many contributions to our community. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in celebrating and commemorating the life and the accomplishments of Joseph D. Putnam.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
OF SERGEANT MAJOR TROY E.
BLACK

HON. MORGAN MCGARVEY

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize an extraordinary American patriot, Sergeant Major Troy E. Black, United States Marine Corps, on the occasion of his retirement following a distinguished 37-year career in faithful service to our Nation.

Sergeant Major Black's journey began in Louisville, Kentucky, where the values of duty, discipline, and perseverance were instilled early in his life. In July 1988, he answered the call to serve and reported to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. There, he began a journey that would span nearly four decades and see him rise to the highest enlisted ranks in the Marine Corps and in our Armed Forces.

After completing infantry school and earning his military occupational specialty as an 0331-Machine Gunner, Sergeant Major Black trained at Marine Security Force School before deploying aboard the USS *Forrestal* (CV-59) in support of Operation Just Cause. He deployed again in 1990 with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines to Kuwait during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

From the beginning, Sergeant Major Black distinguished himself not only through valor in combat but also as a dedicated mentor and leader. He served as a two-time drill instructor at Parris Island, ultimately rising to the roles of Senior Drill Instructor, Drill Instructor School Instructor, and Drill Master of the Recruit Training Regiment. It was there, fittingly at the very birthplace of Marine transformation, that he met his wife Stacie, herself a proud Marine who would later retire as a First Sergeant.

Following the tragic attacks on our Nation on September 11, 2001, Sergeant Major Black deployed repeatedly to the frontlines of the Global War on Terror. With the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, he completed two combat deployments to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and later, with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, he deployed twice more to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In one unforgettable moment of heroism, Sergeant Major Black ran through uncleared territory to rescue a wounded Marine struck by an IED. For this act of extraordinary courage under fire, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V", a testament to his unwavering commitment to those he led.

His exceptional leadership culminated in his appointment as the 19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, the highest enlisted position in that service, and subsequently as the 5th Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the most senior enlisted position in the entire U.S. Armed Forces.

Over the course of nearly four decades, Sergeant Major Black's work has had an immeasurable impact on our Joint Forces servicemembers and the civilian employees of the Department of Defense. His dedication to the mission, to the men and women and then families who accomplish it, and his tireless efforts to lead from the front, have contributed to the safety and security of all Americans. Today, his legacy lives on through the Black family, with their daughter, Corporal Are'wynn Black, following in her parents' footsteps in the Marine Corps.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I offer my deepest thanks and best wishes to Sergeant Major Troy Black, to 1st Sergeant Major Stacie Black, and to their entire family as they begin this well-earned new chapter.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. WILLIAM R. TIMMONS IV

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Mr. TIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome to Washington, D.C., His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christianity worldwide. As Archbishop of Constantinople—New Rome, His All-Holiness is recognized as the "first among equals" of Orthodox Primates and shepherds more than 300 million faithful across the globe.

Since his election in 1991, Patriarch Bartholomew has been an unwavering advocate for peace, interfaith dialogue, religious freedom, and environmental stewardship, earning him the title of "Green Patriarch" and international recognition for his vision of reconciliation and unity. He has convened historic gatherings of Orthodox leaders, fostered dialogue with other Christian traditions, and extended a hand of friendship to leaders of the Jewish and Muslim faiths.

In South Carolina's 4th District, the Greek Orthodox community has been a vital part of our religious and cultural life. Families in Greenville and Spartanburg have shared their faith and traditions for generations, strengthening the bonds of community and enriching the fabric of our state.