

HONORING THE URBAN LEAGUE
OF BROWARD COUNTY

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I rise to recognize the exceptional work of the Urban League of Broward County on its 50th Anniversary.

The National Urban League is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to elevating the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. The Urban League of Broward County was founded in 1975 as an affiliate of the National Urban League, and since then, this community-based organization has been dedicated to empowering communities and changing lives.

The League helps communities in need gain power and independence by promoting civil rights, economic self-reliance, and social equality. They offer programs in education, job training, housing, and entrepreneurship to empower residents.

The League helps our community achieve these goals through a variety of programming—from their Summer Enrichment Program, which offers students the opportunity to create, discover, and learn, to ADVANCE-U, which offers a full range of essential economic resources for residents to help them succeed in the workforce, stabilize their finances and build assets.

The Urban League of Broward County's commitment to the health and wellness of Broward's families is extensive and impressive. And the pivotal role it plays for South Florida families is invaluable. I am grateful to the leadership and staff for their tireless efforts to fight for the rights of my constituents and all Americans to live with freedom, dignity, and prosperity.

I thank President and CEO, Dr. Germaine Smith-Baugh, and everyone at the Urban League of Broward County for improving the lives of those in Florida's 25th Congressional District and across Broward County. I congratulate them on 50 remarkable years.

RECOGNIZING KYLA GUERRERO
FOR HER IMPRESSIVE GOLD
AWARD PROJECT

HON. JANELLE S. BYNUM

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Ms. BYNUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the impressive efforts of Kyla Guerrero, a constituent of mine from Bend, Oregon. Kyla has used her Gold Award Girl Scout project to tackle the issue of food waste, taking leftover food and repurposing it to sustain a local farm. I am truly impressed by her innovation and hard work. This creative compost system keeps our community eco-friendly and helps protect our planet for future generations. I thank and congratulate Kyla. I include in the RECORD this article from the Central Oregon Daily written by Jakob Salao that details Kyla's hard work:

BEND, Ore.—More than one-third of all available food in the country goes to waste,

according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A Central Oregon Girl Scout is hoping to change that by taking that waste and using it to sustain a local farm. "I've always had a passion for supporting environmental efforts and I feel like this was a way I could create a project that suits those passions," Girl Scout Kyla Guerrero said. "And working with a local farm has been super fun." Guerrero is one of two local Girl Scouts working on a Gold Award Project. She's partnered with Around the Bend Farms to get youth involved and make farming a little more eco-friendly.

"We're creating this food scrap to compost system where the food scrap waste from the Bethlehem Inn kitchen gets delivered here and turned into compost which is used for the farm's agriculture," Guerrero said. Those food scraps contain vital nutrients for vegetables that would otherwise rot away in a landfill. "By throwing those nutrients into a compost pile and into that kind of system, we can re-collect the nutrients and re-integrate it into our soil to rebuild that cycle," Urban Farm Manager Josh Lesko said. "Then, our plants are just re-feeding themselves and feeding us more in the future."

The compost system also helps keep the farm eco-friendly. "We're lowering the amount of costs we're putting in," Lesko said. "We're lowering the amount of transportation for things we need to pick up. We're letting the natural cycle do its thing and kind of working alongside it." But for Guerrero, it's starting to plant the seeds for the next generation. "It's a great opportunity to have high school students come out and share this with their friends and be like 'oh there's a farm here and we can all help together.' I really like that aspect of it," Guerrero said.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
BARTHOLOMEW TO WASHINGTON,
D.C.

HON. SETH MOULTON

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Bartholomew to Washington, D.C.

The Ecumenical Patriarch is the spiritual leader of over 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. Since 1991, he has served as the Archbishop of Constantinople—New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, a role that traces its lineage to the earliest days of Christianity. As the "first among equals" among Orthodox Christian leaders, he has been a central figure in promoting unity within Orthodoxy, religious freedom globally, and constructive dialogue among faiths.

Born on the island of Imvros, the Ecumenical Patriarch has spent his life in service to both faith and humanity. He is internationally recognized for his efforts to protect the environment—earning the nickname "the Green Patriarch"—as well as for his work in advancing human rights, reconciliation among faiths, and support for religious communities living under persecution.

He has been welcomed by presidents and prime ministers around the world, addressed the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress, and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1997. In September 2025, he will return to the United States to receive the Templeton Prize—the world's most distin-

guished award at the intersection of faith and science.

This visit is especially meaningful to the many Greek Orthodox Americans in Massachusetts and in my district. From churches in Lynn, Peabody, and Salem, to communities across the Commonwealth, Greek Americans have contributed profoundly to the civic, cultural, and spiritual fabric of our state. The Ecumenical Patriarch's visit is a source of deep pride for many of my constituents and a reminder of the enduring connection between our country and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Once again, I welcome Ecumenical Patriarch to Washington and in honoring his decades of global leadership, his commitment to peace and human dignity, and his enduring contributions to our shared moral and spiritual life.

HONORING HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and global leadership of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. He is the spiritual leader of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide and a tireless advocate for peace, human rights, and interfaith dialogue.

As the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, recognized as the senior primate of the Orthodox Christian world, His All-Holiness has dedicated more than three decades to advancing religious freedom, protecting our planet, and fostering understanding across faiths and nations. This month, he visits Washington, D.C., following his acceptance of the prestigious Templeton Prize in New York City, joining the ranks of past recipients such as Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Throughout his tenure, Patriarch Bartholomew has met with presidents, popes, and parliaments across the globe, including multiple visits to the White House and the United States Congress. He has worked courageously to defend religious liberty despite ongoing challenges in his native Turkey. His commitment to peace and reconciliation, despite significant challenges, embodies the highest ideals of global religious leadership.

Known also as "the Green Patriarch," His All-Holiness has been a pioneering voice on environmental issues, organizing international interfaith summits to confront climate change and ecological degradation as spiritual and moral imperatives. His leadership has inspired generations to see care for the Earth as a sacred responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his profound contributions to global peace, interreligious cooperation, and the advancement of human dignity. His presence in our Nation's capital is a powerful reminder of the vital role that faith leaders play in building a more just, compassionate, and united world.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, though I was present on the floor, I missed Roll Call vote No. 246, on Congresswoman MACE's Amendment No. 14 to the defense authorization bill. I intended to and would have voted no.

This amendment cruelly denies transgender service members access to gender-affirming medical care through TRICARE. Every sailor in our Navy begins at Naval Station Great Lakes in my district, and they deserve the best care this country can provide. To deny them that care is to betray their service and lose our moral compass.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Washington, D.C. He serves as the spiritual leader and *Primus inter Pares* (First among Equals) of Orthodox Christianity worldwide, a Church of 300 million people.

Later this month, His All-Holiness will visit the United States to receive the Templeton Prize, the world's most prestigious international award at the intersection of religion and science. This honor is awarded annually to those who advance Sir John Templeton's vision of progress in religion through discoveries and insights that deepen our understanding across faiths. Since being elected Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew has been a courageous voice for unity, religious freedom, and environmental stewardship. His leadership has left a lasting mark on both the Orthodox world and the entire global community.

This will not be his first visit to the United States. When he came in 1997, he was received in the Oval Office by President Bill

Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton, who hosted a White House reception in his honor. He was also presented with the Congressional Gold Medal in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda by Speaker Newt Gingrich, a rare and distinguished honor. The State Department hosted him in the Ben Franklin Room, and Vice President Al Gore welcomed him at a breakfast at the Vice President's Residence.

These visits remind us of the enduring spiritual and cultural bonds between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the United States. As we prepare to welcome His All-Holiness once again, we recognize not just the leader of a faith, but a global advocate for justice, peace, and human dignity.

On behalf of Virginia's 7th District Greek Orthodox community, it is an honor to welcome him to Washington.

HONORING THE MARRIAGE OF ALEXANDRA HELLER AND JOSHUA NARCISO

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the marriage of Alexandra Heller and Joshua Narciso. It is with profound joy and admiration that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to them on this special occasion. Their wedding day is not only a celebration of their love but also the beginning of a journey built on partnership, resilience, and shared purpose—their own love story, written in real time.

I have had the privilege of watching Alexandra grow both personally and professionally during her time in my office. I have seen firsthand the determination and resilience she brings to every challenge and the compassion and thoughtfulness with which she approaches each task. She has consistently shown an unwavering commitment to serving others, and I could not be prouder of the leader and the person she has become. Truly, she has shown us all what it means to be fearless.

I will always remember the pivotal moments she helped us achieve together. Her dedication and persistence were instrumental in advancing the designation of the Chuckwalla National Monument, ensuring the protection of our desert lands for future generations. She also contributed greatly to the passage of the

PACT Act, landmark legislation that delivers long-overdue health care and justice to our Nation's veterans. These accomplishments are historic—proof that she has always had the courage to speak now and fight for what matters.

What has impressed me most, however, is not only her professional success, but also her strength of character. She lifts others up, she brings people together, and she embodies a spirit of service and compassion that is rare and deeply inspiring. These are the same qualities that will sustain her in marriage—the kind of love that makes every day feel like daylight.

I also want to share a bit about how Alexandra and Joshua's story began. On their first three dates, Joshua playfully "swept Alexandra off her feet" with what sounded like a whirlwind world tour to Barcelona, France, and Italy. In reality, the story is just as charming: they first met at a restaurant called Barcelona, then attended a wine event at the French Embassy, followed by a holiday party at the Italian Embassy. When the world shut down, Joshua showed up at Alexandra's apartment with a suitcase . . . and never left. It seems they knew then that they were enchanted to meet each other.

Marriage, like public service, is rooted in trust, resilience, and love. It is about showing up for one another through both triumphs and challenges, through sunshine and midnights, and walking forward together. The compassion, joy, and strength she brings will help build a solid foundation for her and Joshua.

I am excited to see the life they will create together, grounded in respect, laughter, and shared vision. May their marriage continue to inspire, bringing joy to themselves and those around them.

As they start this new chapter, may they cherish the small moments as much as the milestones. May they celebrate laughter, lean on compassion in tough times, and nurture a love that grows deeper with each year. Just as her service has touched many lives, her partnership will be a reminder to us all that "You Belong With Me" isn't just a lyric, it is a promise.

It is a true honor to witness this day and to celebrate their union. Please know that they carry with them not only my warmest congratulations but also my deepest admiration and pride. May their marriage be blessed with health, happiness, and a love that truly never goes out of style.