

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. SCOTT FITZGERALD

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to our Nation's Capital. As the Head of the second largest Christian Church in the world, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew leads a Church of 300 million people, including a large community in Southeastern Wisconsin.

His work towards the cause of peace should be commended, and on behalf of Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District, I congratulate Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew ahead of receiving the Templeton Prize.

HONORING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
BARTHOLOMEW FOR HIS WINNING OF THE TEMPLETON PRIZE

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my Greek Orthodox constituents to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to our Nation's Capital. I welcome him to Washington, D.C. and congratulate him for winning the Templeton Prize, a distinguished award received by other religious leaders such as the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

The prize honors those who have spent a lifetime, as Patriarch Bartholomew has devoted to Sir John Templeton's vision of using the power of science to examine the deepest questions of humankind and our way in the universe.

Born in Turkey, Patriarch Bartholomew studied at institutions across Europe and even here in the United States at Yale and Georgetown.

Now, the primary spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian church, and a figure of global importance, he has addressed the World Economic Forum, UNESCO, the United Nations, and the European Parliament. He has stood out as a leader bridging divides and finding common ground, seeking peace throughout the world, and confronting global conflict with personal experience and a unique perspective.

A peacemaker through and through, Patriarch Bartholomew said that "Human conflict may be inevitable in our world; but war and violence are not. If our age will be remembered, it may be for those who dedicated themselves to the cause of peace."

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that we welcome Patriarch Bartholomew and recognize his life, his career, and the global impact of his teachings. We are grateful for his lifetime of service brokering peace and advancing our common interests, and we welcome him to Washington, D.C.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARRENDALE COMMUNITY

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District proudly recognizes the 100th Anniversary of the Warrendale Community. From 1925 to 2025, Warrendale Community has been a place of love, community, and stewardship, promoting community outreach and creating a home for all.

The Warrendale Community Organization mission is to promote a relationship between the residents. Initiate educational programs that enhance the quality of life within the community that are beneficial to citizens and to expand their knowledge with a variety of programs and initiatives for all to enjoy. Such as the Free After-school STEAM program, Health and Safety Fair and many other amazing programs and initiatives. Our district is proud of the partnership and leadership of this community, not only in creating innovative and essential programming for our neighbors, but for creating a warm and welcoming experience for all residents.

The 12th Congressional District congratulates Warrendale Community and all of its neighbors on their steadfast service to community and such honorable work in their celebration of 100 years of community.

HONORING LIEUTENANT JOSEPH A. LAPOINTE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE FDNY CEREMONIAL UNIT

HON. NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Lieutenant Joseph A. LaPointe on the occasion of his retirement from the New York City Fire Department Ceremonial Unit, effective September 15, 2025. This date marks the conclusion of more than four decades of distinguished public service and a career defined by leadership, compassion, and unwavering dedication to the FDNY and the people of New York City.

Born in the South Bronx, Lieutenant LaPointe is the eldest of seven children. His father served as a firefighter in the Bronx and his mother dedicated herself to raising their family. He grew up in Great Kills on Staten Island's South Shore and now resides in Annadale with his wife, Linda, and their three children, Thomas, Teresa, and Tara.

Lieutenant LaPointe began his distinguished career in civil service in 1982 as a New York City corrections officer. In 1984, he transferred to the New York City Police Department, serving as a police officer in Manhattan's Midtown North Precinct. In 1990, he joined the New York City Fire Department, assigned to Brooklyn Ladder 109. He was promoted to Lieutenant in January 2001 and became an instructor at the FDNY Fire Academy.

On September 11, 2001—the darkest day in the history of the FDNY—343 firefighters,

along with 23 NYPD officers, 37 PAPD members, and thousands of innocent civilians, perished. In the immediate aftermath, the entire Fire Academy staff, including Lieutenant LaPointe, was assigned to the World Trade Center site for rescue and recovery operations. By the end of that month, he and other academy instructors were reassigned to the FDNY Ceremonial Unit to take on the monumental and solemn responsibility of planning and executing the funerals and memorial services for all 343 fallen firefighters.

Funerals and memorials were held six days a week, sometimes with as many as 20 services in one day. In October 2001, Lieutenant LaPointe was asked to lead the ceremonial team handling services in Brooklyn and Staten Island. On December 31, 2001, he was assigned to Ladder 114 "Tally Ho" in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, while continuing his work with the Ceremonial Unit.

In 2004, he became the Executive Officer of the Ceremonial Unit, and in 2007, he was appointed its Commanding Officer. In that role, he has overseen a staff of more than 400 fire and EMS officers, firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics, managing over 800 events annually, including graduations, promotions, parades, and, most importantly, line-of-duty funerals.

Lieutenant LaPointe's leadership, compassion, and unwavering dedication have left an indelible mark not only on the FDNY, but on all of New York City. His 43 years of public service exemplify the highest traditions of honor, duty, and selflessness. I am proud to represent him in Congress and to call him my constituent.

Beyond his service in uniform, he is a proud board member of the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, which supports catastrophically injured members of the Armed Forces and assists the families of fallen members of the military, law enforcement, fire, and EMS services.

Mr. Speaker, few individuals can say they have stood beside thousands of grieving families and lifted them with dignity, respect, and love. Lieutenant LaPointe has done so for more than two decades, and in doing so, he has become part of the very soul of the FDNY. On behalf of a grateful community, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Lieutenant LaPointe's extraordinary career and in offering our deepest gratitude for a lifetime of selfless service.

RECOGNIZING THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, HIS ALL-HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW

HON. MAGGIE GOODLANDER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. GOODLANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All-Holiness Bartholomew, the longest-serving Archbishop of Constantinople in the two-thousand-year history of Christianity and the spiritual leader of a church of 300 million people, including more than 4,800 Orthodox Christians living in New Hampshire. Ordained to the Diaconate in 1961 and to the Priesthood in 1969, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew served as Assistant Dean

at the Theological School of Halki before he was appointed Personal Secretary to the late Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios, Metropolitan of Philadelphia, and Metropolitan of Chalcedon. I want to thank His All-Holiness for his commitment to religious freedom for all faiths as well as his lifetime of service to all people and our planet. During this visit, His All-Holiness will receive the Templeton Prize to honor his environmental and spiritual leadership. I am honored to welcome him back to the Capitol and recognize his contributions to our Nation and the world.

HONORING NATIONAL HISPANIC
HERITAGE MONTH

HON. FRANK J. MRVAN

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month and its 2025 theme, Collective Heritage: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future. From September 15, 2025, through October 15, 2025, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, the people of the United States will celebrate the accomplishments of Hispanic Americans and the invaluable contributions they have made in our country, society, and economy.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins each year on September 15 and recognizes the anniversaries of the independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile observe their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. This month, communities across Indiana's 1st Congressional District will gather for parades and celebrations to observe Hispanic Heritage Month in the cities of East Chicago and Hammond, Indiana.

The theme of National Hispanic Heritage this month emphasizes the importance of honoring people and traditions of the past while inspiring future generations to succeed. As we reflect on the rich tapestry of history and culture that Hispanic communities have woven into our society, we look to the next generation for inspiration and leadership.

During this time, I commend the dedicated Hispanic leaders whose mentorship and guidance inspires future generations to succeed in Northwest Indiana and beyond. As we recognize the extensive contributions made by Hispanic American leaders of the past, let us look to inspire future generations to succeed in Northwest Indiana and across the country. Let us commit to supporting and uplifting Hispanic voices across the Nation to ensure that the legacy of those who came before us continues to inspire and transform society for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and in recognizing the many achievements of Hispanic Americans throughout the history of our Nation. Our country is strengthened and uplifted by members of the Hispanic community, and our collective success is because of their contributions.

HONORING MAYOR JOHNNIE MAE
NEAL

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Mayor Johnnie Mae Neal, and outstanding public servant and dedicated community leader who has faithfully served the Town of Sidon, Mississippi.

Mayor Neal has long been a champion for civic engagement, health equity, and grassroots outreach. Under her leadership, Sidon has taken vital steps to improve access to essential services and empower its citizens through direct community involvement. Notably, during the 2020 U.S. Census campaign, Mayor Neal led efforts to ensure that every resident of Sidon was counted. She hosted local town halls, provided free protective gear during the COVID-19 pandemic, and made it a priority to offer health screenings and voter education—actions that reflect both her compassion and foresight.

Her commitment to public service exemplifies the spirit of rural leadership, where resources may be limited, but determination and love for one's community are boundless. Mayor Neal's vision and integrity have earned her the deep respect of her constituents and peers alike.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Mayor Johnnie Mae Neal for her unwavering dedication to the people of Sidon. Her efforts reflect the best of what local government can be—responsive, inclusive, and people-centered.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LATEEFAH SIMON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. SIMON. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call Vote Number 220 on H.R. 747, I mistakenly recorded my vote as NAY when I should have voted YEA.

HONORING THE LIFE OF REV-
EREND THOMAS DELBERT
STATON

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District honors the extraordinary life and legacy of Reverend Thomas Delbert Staton, a remarkable man whose achievements in ministry, academics, community service, and athletic career set an example for us all.

Thomas was born on May 21, 1957, as the fourth son of Reverend Chester Staton and Odesa Staton. He excelled in school, earning an athletic scholarship to the University of Michigan. After working for over two decades with DTE, he began a successful consulting

career for Detroit's big-three automotive companies. Thomas used this wealth of experience and wisdom to serve as a pillar of his community, working tirelessly as a minister, motivational speaker, basketball coach, and local township treasurer. As a featured speaker of the Detroit Pistons, his words energized tens of thousands of children.

We extend our sincerest condolences to his lifelong partner, Wanda, and son, Thomas. Our collective memory of his dedication to excellence, faith, and service will live on through his beautiful family and the countless people who were touched by his striking words and actions.

WELCOMING THE ECUMENICAL PA-
TRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE,
HIS ALL-HOLINESS BAR-
THOLOMEW

HON. GEORGE LATIMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to recognize His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, known throughout the world as the "Bridge Builder" and the "Patriarch of Peace." As the spiritual leader of over 250 million Orthodox Christians, he has dedicated his life to the pursuit of reconciliation, understanding, and human dignity. Despite enduring decades of persecution and restrictions upon his Patriarchate in Istanbul, he has remained steadfast in his mission, bearing witness not only to the strength of faith but also to the power of compassion.

His All-Holiness Bartholomew, born Demetrios Arhondonis in 1940 on the island of Imvros was elected in October 1991 as the 270th Archbishop of the 2000-year-old Church founded by the Apostle Andrew. He holds the historic title of Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, a position that dates back to the sixth century. A citizen of Turkey, he studied in Imvros, Istanbul, Rome, Switzerland, Munich, and Athens, where he earned his doctorate in Canon Law and helped found the Society of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches. Ordained in 1961 and 1969, he served as Assistant Dean of Halki, Secretary to Patriarch Demetrios, Metropolitan of Philadelphia, and later Metropolitan of Chalcedon before his election as Ecumenical Patriarch.

Patriarch Bartholomew's leadership extends far beyond the walls of the Church. He has become a global voice for peace, interfaith communication, and environmental stewardship, reminding the world that creation itself is a sacred trust. Through initiatives such as establishing a worldwide day of prayer for the environment and convening international gatherings of scientists, leaders, and theologians, he has exemplified how faith can serve the common good. His tireless journeys across continents and his engagements with parliaments, heads of state, and religious leaders have earned him honors from the United Nations, the European Union, and this very Congress, which bestowed upon him the Congressional Gold Medal beneath this Capitol dome.

Mr. Speaker, in honoring Patriarch Bartholomew, we recognize a man whose life's work has been the building of bridges, between East and West, faith and justice. His