

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

enduring witness to peace and extraordinary work for humanity is an inspiration to us all. May his example continue to inspire us to build bridges of understanding, to care for all of God's creation, and continuously seek justice and reconciliation.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING HIS  
ALL-HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW

**HON. BRYAN STEIL**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 15, 2025*

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodox Christianity around the world. On behalf of the millions of Eastern Orthodox Christians in the United States, including thousands of Greek Orthodox in my district in Wisconsin, I welcome Bartholomew to the United States.

His All-Holiness Bartholomew has served as the leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church for more than 30 years. Prior to his election to this role, Bartholomew served in various roles for the Church including as the personal secretary to his predecessor, His All-Holiness Demetrios I. This week, Bartholomew is in Washington, D.C. to meet with President Trump and Congress.

Bartholomew will also travel to New York later this month to receive the distinguished Templeton Prize, joining visionaries like the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Mother Teresa as among the few to receive this honor. The Templeton Prize recognizes individuals for a lifetime of work and achievement in faith and the sciences.

On behalf of the many Eastern Orthodox who call Southeast Wisconsin home, including parishioners of Kimissis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church in Racine. I welcome His All-Holiness Bartholomew to the U.S. and congratulate him on his winning of the Templeton Prize.

REMEMBERING SHERIFF WILLIAM  
"BILL" OLDHAM

**HON. STEVE COHEN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 15, 2025*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to Shelby County Sheriff William "Bill" Oldham, who passed on September 4 at the age of 75.

A lifelong Memphian, Sheriff Oldham served for 27 years in the Memphis Police Department rising through the ranks from patrolman to Police Director. He then was elected to two terms as sheriff and was honored by fellow lawmen with the Tennessee Sheriff's Association as Sheriff of the Year in 2015. He dedicated his life to law enforcement, serving and protecting our community with integrity, professionalism and character.

A longtime parishioner at St. Louis Catholic Church, growing up Mr. Oldham attended Nativity, St. Thomas and Memphis Catholic High School and then attended what was then called Memphis State University. He was a big

sports fan and cheered on the Tigers, Cubs and Notre Dame's Fighting Irish. He also coached teams at St. Joseph, St. Paul, St. Louis and Bishop Byrne.

His love of children was demonstrated in his treatment of incarcerated young people and he never gave up on them. His own three children called him "Chiefy." Among his sterling qualities was his love of justice and commitment to doing the right thing in an effort to make our community a safe place for all.

I extend my sincere condolences to his wife of 53 years Jean, his children Neal, Katie and Beth, his grandchildren and his extended family, his law enforcement colleagues, and his many friends. Memphis has lost a moral leader. His was a life of service to others and was well-lived.

He will be missed.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS  
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW TO NEW YORK AND  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

**HON. DANIEL S. GOLDMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 15, 2025*

Mr. GOLDMAN of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer a heartfelt and historic welcome to America for a truly remarkable global religious leader—His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople and the Spiritual Head of the Orthodox Christian Church, the second-largest Christian Church in the world.

We are deeply honored to have His All-Holiness visiting our country, our Nation's capital, and New York, home to a vibrant Orthodox community, including the largest Greek, Ukrainian, and Romanian populations in the United States. His visit is a moment of profound significance for Orthodox Christians, for the broader faith community, and for all who cherish moral leadership in times of global challenge.

His All-Holiness comes to America in conjunction with his acceptance of the Templeton Prize in New York City—an award bestowed upon visionary leaders whose lives and work affirm the spiritual dimension of human existence. The Templeton Prize has previously honored extraordinary figures such as Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Patriarch Bartholomew joins that distinguished company, not only as a spiritual figure but as a tireless advocate for interfaith dialogue, peace, and human dignity.

Today, as the world witnesses ongoing war and displacement, His All-Holiness has stood firmly on the side of justice and sovereignty. On the eve of the third anniversary of Russia's illegal and immoral war against Ukraine. Patriarch Bartholomew declared unequivocally that, "Ukraine's sovereignty is not up for debate, nor can it be negotiated under the guise of diplomacy." He rightly insists that any future peace must include Ukraine as an equal participant. He has commended President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for his tireless defense of his nation's independence and democratic values—a position that echoes the principles of freedom and self-determination we hold dear.

As the "first among equals" in Orthodoxy, His All-Holiness continues to provide moral

clarity and spiritual leadership not just for the Orthodox faithful, but for the world at large. He has reminded us—through words and deeds—that faith must be active, that leadership must be courageous, and that peace must be rooted in justice.

Please join me in welcoming His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States of America. His presence is a blessing to our Nation and a beacon of hope to hundreds of millions around the world.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS  
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

**HON. CHRISTOPHER R. DELUZIO**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 15, 2025*

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

As the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All-Holiness Bartholomew, is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, including thousands living in Western Pennsylvania. Since his election as the 270th Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome in 1991, His All-Holiness has continuously worked to promote religious freedoms, human rights, and stronger environmental protections.

Through the tireless work to promote international peace and religious tolerance, His All-Holiness was awarded the Gold Medal of Congress during his visit in 1997. During this current visit to the United States, His All-Holiness will receive the Templeton Prize, the prestigious award honoring contribution in religion and science.

I welcome His All-Holiness to Washington, D.C. and I congratulate him on his great achievement.

HONORING FIRE CAPTAIN MARK  
ANDREW

**HON. RASHIDA TLAI**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 15, 2025*

Ms. TLAI. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District of Michigan honors Fire Captain Mark Andrew, a second-generation firefighter, for the incredible tenacity and courage he displayed throughout his nearly three-decade career serving the Dearborn community.

Captain Andrew began his service on April 29, 1997. Over the course of 28 years, he earned five promotions, advancing from Firefighter 1 to Fire Captain by 2015. He earned 40 awards in recognition of his commitment to consistently exceptional work, scholarship, community service, fire education, and the safety of all people. The community of Dearborn often commended his sincere care and empathy toward the countless people he saved, his coworkers, and every person he served.

The 12th Congressional District of Michigan extends our deepest gratitude to Fire Captain Mark Andrew. Our neighbors are safer and