

figure who has focused on organizing international and interfaith peace conferences, challenging racism and religious fundamentalism, and promoting religious freedom and human rights. He is also seen as a global leader in championing environmental stewardship and has organized several international summits to address ecological issues. His accolades include a Congressional Gold Medal in 1997, recognition from *The Guardian* as one of the world's leaders in raising environmental awareness, and recognition from *Time Magazine* as one of the world's most influential people.

Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to welcome the Ecumenical Patriarch to Washington, D.C. and to congratulate him on his receiving such an esteemed award in the Templeton Prize.

HONORING PERRY WATSON

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 the illustrious career of Coach Perry Watson.

Many know him as Coach Watson, but he was a high school counselor to hundreds of us in southwest Detroit when he was assigned at Southwestern High School. Perry Watson is a lifelong Detroit and known for his coaching career. However, if not for him, I would never have gone to college. Counselor Perry Watson was stationed on the lower floor at Southwestern High School, and you would always find him standing in the doorway catching his students as they passed. I was one of them. He kept on me for not applying to college. Even after I explained that my family couldn't afford it, he insisted. He said, "Everything will turn out okay." He was right.

He later served as an assistant coach at the University of Michigan, and then the head coach of the University of Detroit Mercy Titans. Over 15 seasons, Coach Perry Watson compiled a 261–198 record, the second-most wins of any Titans coach in history. This exceptional record earned him a well-deserved place in the UDM Hall of Fame. It wasn't a surprise that Coach Watson ensured his students displayed academic excellence. Under his supervision, 96 percent of his players graduated from the University of Detroit Mercy.

Students from across the city of Detroit were brought together under the instruction of Coach Perry Watson. Their distinction in academics and athletics is a testament to his influence and mentorship.

We thank Perry Watson for his profound contributions and celebrate the lasting legacy he leaves in both sports and education.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL
AEROSPACE WEEK

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Aerospace Week that just concluded.

On December 17, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright completed the first successful flight, igniting a spark for aviation innovation in the United States. More than a century later, America has continued to be at the forefront of aerospace development, in technology, defense, manufacturing, transportation, and exploration. At the conclusion of National Aerospace Week, we recognize the important contributions of aviation companies, workers and organizations to the aerospace and defense industry in our country.

In fact, the aerospace and defense industry generated more than \$955 billion in sales in 2024, creating jobs and boosting the economy. In 2024, the aerospace and defense industry accounted for 1.5 percent of the nominal GDP. More than two million Americans contribute to this industry, crafting the machinery and equipment that power the industry. Many of these Americans in the aerospace and defense industry call Kansas home.

It is my honor to represent the Air Capital of the World—Wichita, Kansas—where hard-working men and women manufacture and design airplanes that are used around the world. When I travel throughout the district, I see firsthand and the passion for aerospace. In Kansas, we are fortunate to educate and train the future pilots, designers, and manufacturers of the aerospace industry.

Aerospace innovation is intertwined with our U.S. Military and defense industrial base. The men and women who serve our Nation are equipped with the most advanced aerospace technologies to keep our Nation safe and secure and allow us to defend ourselves against our adversaries.

Furthermore, America's preeminence in aviation is a model and inspiration for other nations around the world. Our fast, safe, and efficient jets, and our new technologies remain the gold standard around the globe.

Aerospace is integral to our economy and defense, and it is a major part of many states throughout the country, including the Sunflower State.

During National Aerospace Week, we recognized all those in this country who continue to push the limits of aviation, from the Wright Brothers in 1903 to the innovators of today.

HONORING SISTER JOANN PERSCH

HON. SEAN CASTEN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the remarkable advocacy of Sister JoAnn Persch. For over four decades, Sister JoAnn has been on the ground helping migrants and asylum seekers in Chicagoland.

Sister JoAnn, along with Sister Pat Murphy, opened Su Casa Catholic Worker House, a sanctuary for survivors of torture from Central America in 1990. Sister JoAnn, Sister Pat, and several Franciscan priests all lived and worked at Su Casa. The house welcomed its first family, a widower and his three children from Guatemala as they sought asylum in Canada. Throughout the 1990's, approximately 160 women, men, and children received temporary residence at Su Casa as they coped with trauma rooted in experiences of war, torture, and political persecution in their home countries in Central America.

As the flow of refugees from Central America slowed, Su Casa grew in its service to single mothers who had survived domestic violence. Su Casa committed to one-year residencies for families rebuilding their lives after domestic violence and homelessness. Since 1996, over 350 people have called Su Casa home.

The Su Casa Catholic Worker House continues to welcome three to six families at a time. The families live in community with residential volunteers who are committed to simplicity, freedom from violence, and love.

Fueled by the horrific family separations at the Broadview Immigration Staging Center in 2007, Sister JoAnn and Sister Pat started weekly prayer vigils on Friday mornings at the facility. They were met with resistance from inside the facility but knew they had to keep fighting to get inside to pray with the detained migrants.

With the help of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, the two Sisters helped pass an Illinois law that mandates access to provide spiritual care for immigrants in detention. This led Sister JoAnn and Sister Pat to work with religious leaders to establish the Illinois Community of Displaced Immigrants, which helps migrants and asylum seekers with wrap-around services, including case management, transit assistance, and housing. To date, the organization has helped over 400 families.

In 2022, Sister JoAnn and Sister Pat founded Catherine's Caring Cause. This organization helps asylum-seeking families pay rent and utilities for a year, offers food assistance, and provides connections to legal aid. The organization has set up eight apartments to house people in need in Chicago.

Sister JoAnn continues her work on the front lines as well. She hosts weekly and Zoom prayer vigils at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement staging and processing center in Broadview. She also frequently visits families whom she has helped throughout the years.

Our county greatly benefits from the incredible work Sister JoAnn does every day. Immigrants make our country better, and we're very fortunate to have heroes like Sister JoAnn fighting for human rights in our community.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW TO THE UNITED STATES

HON. LANCE GOODEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. GOODEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States and congratulate him on receiving the distinguished Templeton Prize.

As the head of the Orthodox Christian Church, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, having faithfully served in this role since October 1991. Throughout his tenure, he has reached across borders and barriers to build peace and reconciliation among diverse faiths and nations. He has convened conferences with Jewish and Muslim

leaders, strengthened Christian-Muslim relations, and championed environmental issues worldwide. Because of this work, he is endearingly known as the “Bridge Builder and Patriarch of Peace.”

His All-Holiness’s commitment to interfaith harmony, human rights, and global peace exemplifies the highest levels of compassion and unity. We are honored by his visit to the United States and are grateful for his dedication to peace and unity. May his legacy, humility, and love for all people continue shining light toward a more just and peaceful world.

HONORING THE CAREER OF
SERGEANT CHARLIE FOUNTAIN

HON. SCOTT FRANKLIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Sergeant Charlie Fountain as he retires after an extraordinary 50 years of service with the Polk County Sheriff’s Office.

Sergeant Fountain began his career in 1975 in the Sheriff’s Office radio room. The following year, after graduating from the Law Enforcement Academy at Polk Community College, he was sworn in as a deputy sheriff. Over the next five decades, he served in a wide range of assignments, including patrol and property crimes investigations. He was later promoted to sergeant, where he oversaw shifts, led specialized units on land, air and water, and most recently supported operations in the Fleet Services Bureau.

Known across the Sheriff’s Office as the “go-to” person, Sergeant Fountain’s deep institutional knowledge and steady leadership made him an invaluable resource to his colleagues and the broader community. He consistently rose to every challenge and earned the trust of those he served alongside.

His recent Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Sheriff’s Association is a fitting tribute to his distinguished career. Beyond any accolade, his legacy will endure through the deputies he mentored and the confidence he inspired in the people of Polk County.

On behalf of my constituents, I thank Sergeant Fountain for his 50 years of service and congratulate him on a retirement most richly earned.

HONORING THE VISIT OF ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE BARTHOLOMEW

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, to Washington, D.C. As spiritual leader of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians, he is revered worldwide as “First Among Equals” among the Primates of Orthodoxy.

Throughout his three decades of service, Patriarch Bartholomew has been a champion of religious freedom and the dignity of all peo-

ple. His advocacy for the environment has earned him the title “Green Patriarch,” underscoring his vision that faith and stewardship of creation must walk hand in hand.

This month, His All-Holiness visits our capital and later will receive the Templeton Prize, recognizing his lifelong witness to faith. Equally deserving of praise is his efforts to spur interfaith dialogue. In a world where we are too often divided by that which makes us different, constructive dialogue that fosters relationships and creates mutual respect is critical.

From his first historic visit in 1997, when he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, to today, his presence has inspired bipartisan respect and admiration.

We welcome him with gratitude and honor his commitment to peace, liberty, and reconciliation.

HONORING ELMWOOD BLESSINGS
BOX

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District of Michigan honors Mr. Vincent and Elizabeth Freeman for the generosity, compassion and dedication they have displayed in creating the Elmwood Blessing Box.

In 2023, the Freemans installed a small food pantry box in front of their home, which allowed neighbors to take food when they were in need at zero cost. Over time, they realized that this demand was greater than initially expected. The Freemans decided to expand the blessing box to include enough food to fill a collection of cabinets and refrigerators, while continuing to expand as the need grew greater. Today, we are extremely excited to celebrate the benevolence, hard work and commitment the Freemans have shown and continue to show as they work to prevent food insecurity throughout Westland, Michigan and beyond.

The 12th Congressional District of Michigan extends our deepest gratitude to the Freemans and hopes their work inspires others. Our community will be forever indebted to them, and we wish them success, health and happiness on the opening of the Elmwood Blessings Box.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
RECOGNIZING “MEDICAL RESEARCH WEEK” FROM SEPTEMBER 15 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 19, 2025

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce a resolution recognizing “Medical Research Week” from September 15 through September 19, 2025. This important resolution will look to recognize the important breakthroughs of medical research improving health outcomes for patients and communities, securing global competitiveness in science, boost-

ing job creation, educating the next generation of scientists, and strengthening economic growth.

Medical research through the support of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), continues to serve a vital role in the medical research enterprise. This research can lead cutting edge preventative strategies and research for treatments and additional cures for long-standing medical challenges such as cancer, Alzheimer’s, heart disease, sickle cell, and obesity. I have met with Hoosier families that are struggling with these rare diseases, and I have been moved by the impact that medical research has on their lives. This has educated me and my colleagues about the necessity of medical research to provide more treatment options and better diagnoses for all Americans.

NIH research funding generates nearly \$93 billion in economic activity and continues to support more than 400,000 jobs across the United States. Medical research is not only focused on improving the health of all Americans, but also as an economic driver in growth and job opportunity. Their work ripples far beyond its headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, and into every State. It drives demand for medical supplies and research equipment, boosts local and regional economics to benefit manufacturers and suppliers across the country, and into many United States territories.

The NIH supported medical research plays a primary role in several sectors. The NIH supports noncommercial and clinical research with private sector innovation, allowing for major achievements in rare diseases such as ALS, substance use disorders, stroke, and Parkinson’s.

During my time in Congress, I have continuously advocated on behalf of medical research. Congressional action has helped support medical research through the NIH and CDC, supported in part by the bipartisan appropriations letter I lead each year to increase NIH overall funding and increasing funding for the Veterans Medical and Prosthetic Research Program. I urge all my colleagues to join me in both these appropriations requests. Imagine what we could accomplish with more robust investments in medical research in our Nation, from making strides to combatting antimicrobial resistance, to harnessing the power of personalized medicine to treat disease, and more. These critical breakthroughs in medical research are our Nation’s best hope in finding cures, prevention measures, and treatments for diseases affecting millions of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this resolution to recognize the importance of medical research in America. I urge the House to support this resolution.

COMMEMORATING THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH ON THE VISIT OF HIS ALL-HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the historic and valued contributions of the Greek Orthodox Christian