

Church to the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, and the United States of America. Since our Nation's inception, Greek Orthodox Christians have been an integral part of the American experience. The church established its first parish in Florida in 1768, followed by the establishment of Greek communities in New Orleans in 1864 and a permanent presence in New York in 1892.

Built upon the pillars of love, faith, and order with the Church of Christ, the Greek Orthodox Church in the U.S., particularly in Chicago, has significantly and positively impacted the fabric and unique community-oriented spirit of the City. The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago consists of 58 parishes and two monasteries across five midwestern states, including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, located near the heart of Chicago, serves as the seat of the Metropolitan of Chicago, with a current membership of approximately 400 families.

The Church is well known in the Chicagoland area for its charitable works and giving spirit toward our Nation's most vulnerable populations. In recent years, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago spearheaded several charitable activities and humanitarian campaigns, such as the Chicago CEO COVID-19 Coalition, thereby demonstrating its longstanding commitment to serving its surrounding community.

I also would like to take this moment to join many of my constituents in Illinois' 7th Congressional District and the families of the Greek Orthodox Church in welcoming to the U.S. this week the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All-Holiness Bartholomew. As the spiritual leader and the *Primus inter Pares* (First among Equals) of Orthodox Christianity worldwide, a Church of 300 million people, His All-Holiness Bartholomew has been at the forefront of the cause of religious freedom for his entire ministry and now stands as the longest-serving Archbishop of Constantinople in the two millennia history of Christianity.

Further, I would like to congratulate His All-Holiness Bartholomew on the recent honor of being named the 2025 Templeton Prize Award recipient, which is the world's most prestigious award in Religion and Science. This honor, along with the noted historic contributions of His All-Holiness and the Greek Orthodox Church, at large, help to highlight the church's enduring influence and commitment to its members and the broader community.

I am proud to represent many of the members of the Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago and even more proud of the fact that, for over a century, the Church has served as a focal point for Greek immigrants and their descendants, contributing to the cultural and social fabric of the communities it serves in Chicago and around the world.

I congratulate the Greek Orthodox Church on its recent accomplishments, and welcome to His All-Holiness Bartholomew on his visit to the U.S. this month.

WELCOMING ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States.

His first visit since 2021, he joins us on his eighth Apostolic trip to our country during which he will receive the prestigious Templeton Prize for his environmental advocacy.

The "Green Patriarch's" landmark 1997 speech in Santa Barbara—in which he first posited the notion of ecological sin—is striking for how revolutionary it was then, and how prescient it remains today. In particular, one line from His All-Holiness' remarks 28 years ago struck me as worthy of meditating upon in the tumultuous times in which we find ourselves.

In his speech, His All-Holiness offers the following: "we lovingly suggest to all the people of the earth, that they seek to help one another to understand the myriad ways in which we are related to the earth, and to one another."

Now, perhaps more than any time in my recollection, that call to engage with one another, identify our commonalities, eschew clinging to our differences, and help—how we can, where we can—feels vital to the moral health of the American people and the long-term viability of our global environment.

On behalf of the Eastern Orthodox Christian community of Southwestern Connecticut, I would like to extend my congratulations to His All-Holiness for his Templeton Prize; it is a well-deserved acknowledgement of his years of advocacy. I hope his trip is a success and that he enjoys his time in the United States.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SERGEANT DONALD "DONNY" GRUNDHAUSER

HON. ANGIE CRAIG

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent, Sergeant Donald "Donny" Grundhauser, who recently passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

Sergeant Grundhauser joined the Saint Paul Police Department in 1994, proud to serve the area where he was born and raised. Over the course of his 30-year career, he served in a wide range of demanding assignments, including SWAT, the Homicide Unit, the Gang and Gun Unit, ATF Federal Task Force, East Investigations as an Acting Commander and the Special Operations Unit. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, Sergeant Grundhauser received three Unit Citations, three Medals of Commendation, two Unit Letters of Recognition, and five individual Letters of Recognition.

Sergeant Grundhauser was deeply respected by his neighbors and colleagues for his courage, selflessness, and commitment to helping others. Known to his fellow officers as

"Grundy," he was a mentor and friend to many, and he lived by the belief that it never cost anything to be kind. His family carries on his legacy of service, with his son, Nicholas, and his two brothers, Mark and Keith, also serving in the Saint Paul Police Department.

I offer my deepest condolences to Sergeant Grundhauser's family—his wife, Kelly, and his children, Jacob and Nicholas. Sergeant Grundhauser represented the best of law enforcement, and I thank him and his family for their service to our community.

CELEBRATING ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AND HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome to America one of our world's significant religious leaders—Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Spiritual Head of Orthodox Christians, the second largest Christian Church in the world. Around the world there are over 250 million Orthodox Christians. In America there are well over a million Orthodox Christians with Churches in all 50 states. Even in low population states there are numerous churches—like for example, four Orthodox Churches in the state of Wyoming.

After his visit in Washington, D.C. with our President at the White House and with the bipartisan leadership of the Congress, he will be traveling to New York City to receive the Templeton Prize. That Prize is one of the world's leading recognitions of world leaders who make an exceptional contribution to the deepest questions regarding the universe and humankind's place and purpose within it. Previous winners of that Prize have included Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, and Billy Graham.

His All-Holiness is also a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest Congressional Award. That Gold Medal had also been awarded to George Washington and to Abraham Lincoln. The Congress emphasized that Gold Medal by having more Members of Congress asking to have their names added as co-sponsors of that legislation than any other bill introduced during the 105th Congress. The Congressional Gold Medal recipients who were presented with the Award immediately before and immediately after Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, were Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela.

Within Christian Orthodoxy, an over 2,000-year-old religion, His All-Holiness is the longest serving Ecumenical Patriarch. He is the 269th direct successor of Jesus Christ's first Apostle, Andrew. Andrew's brother Peter carried his mission to what is today the Vatican. Today's Pope Leo is the 266th direct successor of the Apostle Peter.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PETER MAYS

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 the life of Peter Mays, a dedicated and beloved member of the Trinity Health family for over 20 years. Peter served in the Information Technology department, where he took pride in his work and was known for his reliability, generosity, and willingness to help others. He continued working as long as his health allowed, retiring just one week before his passing. When not working, you could find Peter riding his bike around the city of Detroit.

During a Trinity Health Town Hall attended by more than 600 employees, colleagues paid tribute to Peter in a special Colleague Remembrance presentation. His coworkers, many of whom became close friends, stood by him and his family through challenging years, offering hospital visits, home support, and heartfelt gestures of kindness.

Peter's service, friendship, and example will be deeply missed, but his impact will continue to inspire those who knew and loved him. The 12th Congressional District of Michigan honors the life of Peter Mays and extends heartfelt condolences to all his loved ones and friends.

THANKING JOHN MCINTYRE (MAC) TOLAR FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR NATION

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and thank John McIntyre (Mac) Tolar for dedicating over three decades of service to our Nation's military, state, local, and federal governments, including the past thirteen years as an employee within the United States House of Representatives.

After graduating from the University of South Carolina, Mac enlisted in the United States Marine Corps as an infantry officer in 1987. Mac remained on active duty for eight years and continued his reserve duty through 2012. During his distinguished military career Mac was also a Reconnaissance Officer and deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and in support of the Global War on Terror.

Mac was decorated with four awards for exceptional individual service and received numerous awards from his unit. While on reserve duty, Mac earned his law degree from the University of South Carolina in 2001 and completed his military career as a Judge Advocate.

After earning his law degree, Mac embarked on a career in local government. From November 2001 to February 2003, Mac served as an Assistant Solicitor for the 15th Circuit in Conway, South Carolina, where he was responsible for prosecuting misdemeanor offenses and General Session transfer cases. Mac showed tremendous initiative in this role by developing and implementing a successful

DUI curriculum for local law enforcement personnel. This training program was so successful that it was later expanded to the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy and the Commission on Prosecution Coordination.

Mac continued his career in South Carolina serving as the in-house Counsel for the Georgetown County government. In this role, Mac was responsible for drafting, reviewing, and approving legal documents, including deeds, contracts, leases, dedication instruments, financing documents, resolutions and ordinances. These wide-ranging responsibilities afforded Mac the opportunity to provide expert legal representation to several county offices, boards, commissions, and employees.

After a four-year tour in private practice, Mac joined the office of United States Representative Martha Roby as her Military Legislative Counsel. Mac's military and legal background perfectly positioned him for his role in the office. His primary responsibilities included serving as the Congresswoman's Veterans affairs, national security, and foreign policy advisor. Mac was instrumental in creating and managing Representative Roby's constituent Veterans' Advisory Committee, which allowed the Congresswoman to gain additional insights, perspectives, and ideas to drive her oversight and legislative agenda.

In July 2014, Mac landed his next role in Congress working for the Select Committee on Benghazi. He was initially hired to serve as the Select Committee's Senior Counsel and then moved into the important role of Security Manager. As an employee of the Select Committee, Mac analyzed thousands of pages of documents, communications, and other executive branch materials relating to the terrorist attacks in Benghazi.

Once his tenure with the Select Committee ended, Mac landed in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer in 2016 and immediately began serving as the Director of the Wounded Warrior Program, now known as the Green & Gold Congressional Aide Program.

Over the past nine years, Mac's leadership, stewardship, and dedication have driven several significant enhancements to this outstanding program. These efforts include modernizing several components of the program, updating the requirements for participation, broadening the scope to cover Gold Star Family Members and Active-Duty Military Spouses, expanding allocations assigned to Member, Committee, Leadership, and House Officer organizations, enhancing the orientation program and professional development offerings for the Aides, and launching the program's social media presence and dynamic website.

Mac's impact on the program is best seen in the lives and careers of the many Aides who came through during his tenure as Director. From December 2016 to August 2025, 339 Aides completed the two-year assignment. Of those, 37 percent of them continued their careers in Congress. Additionally, nearly 80 percent of the Aides built on their experience by finding new roles in government, transitioning successfully to the private sector, or enrolling in college to further their education. These achievements are a true reflection of Mac's leadership—underscoring not only the strength of the program, but also the lasting opportunities it provided to so many.

I would also like to recognize and thank Mac's family for their encouragement, love, and support, including his wife Helen Tolar—

who was also a decorated House and Senate senior staff member—and their three children Walker, Mary Mac, and Oliver.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Mac Tolar for his outstanding contributions and overall impact on our Nation. Whether it was in the military, local or state government, or as an employee of the House of Representatives, Mac always made a difference in each job and an impact in every role.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great honor to welcome to our Nation's Capital His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch. He is the Spiritual Head of the Orthodox Christian Church worldwide and shepherd to over 300 million faithful. For Orthodox Christians across the globe, including many of my own constituents in Northwest Ohio, His All-Holiness is not only their spiritual father but also a guiding light for interfaith understanding, religious freedom, and environmental stewardship.

Part of his visit to the United States is to receive the distinguished Templeton Prize in New York City. This recognition, bestowed previously on figures such as Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, acknowledges his lifetime of service in advancing the harmony of faith and reason, and his courageous leadership on behalf of peace and the protection of God's creation.

His All-Holiness is no stranger to the halls of Congress. On his first visit to our Nation's Capital in 1997, he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in the Rotunda, where he delivered an address that remains a touchstone in the history of religious freedom and international dialogue. Through subsequent visits under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the Ecumenical Patriarch has been received with the highest honors by our Nation's leaders.

For more than three decades as Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness has been a bridge-builder between peoples and nations. He has convened leaders of the Abrahamic faiths in pursuit of peace and reconciliation. He has boldly raised the conscience of the world to the urgent moral imperative of environmental responsibility. For these efforts, he is rightly known as the "Green Patriarch." He has also been a steadfast advocate for human rights and religious liberty across the globe, strengthening the cause of freedom for all people.

On behalf of the people of Northwest Ohio, and especially our vibrant Greek Orthodox community, I am proud to extend our heartfelt welcome to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew as he returns to Washington. We rejoice in his recognition with the Templeton Prize, and we pray that his ministry of peace, love, and reconciliation will continue to inspire our Nation and our world.