

new challenge, and I look forward to seeing her continued success in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you in joining me to recognize Kathryn Rexrode for her service to Virginia's 1st District and the Nation.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, on September 15, 2025, I missed a recorded vote. Had I been present, on Roll Call No. 266, H.R. 3400, the TRAVEL Act, I would have voted Yea.

#### HONORING CASEY D. YOUNGER, SR.

### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend an outstanding Mississippian, Mr. Casey D. Younger, Sr., for his exemplary academic achievements, athletic excellence, professional success, and recent induction into the Millsaps College Athletics Hall of Fame.

A native of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Mr. Younger has always demonstrated a commitment to excellence. A proud graduate of Vicksburg High School, he went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Millsaps College in 2008, where he stood out as both a scholar and an athlete. He was named to the Dean's List, served as Chair of the Political Science Club, and received several athletic honors, including selection to the National Football Foundation Hampshire Honor Society, the ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District Team, and NCAA Football All-American honors.

Mr. Younger continued his academic pursuits at the Mississippi College School of Law, earning his Juris Doctor degree in 2012. During his time in law school, he was awarded the Best Paper Award in the Constitutional Law Seminar, the John B. Fareese Trial Advocacy Scholarship, and the prestigious R. Jess Brown Award. He also held leadership roles as Vice President of the Black Law Students Association, Editor of The African American Law School Survival Guide, Chair of the Thurgood Marshall Trial Practice Team, and served as a Star Mentor to his peers.

Today, Mr. Younger is a respected attorney based in Jackson, Mississippi. His primary areas of legal practice include medical malpractice defense, motor vehicle defense, nursing home and long-term care defense, premises liability, products liability, and workers' compensation defense.

His athletic legacy continues to be recognized. In 2021, Mr. Younger was named to the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) 30th Anniversary Football Team and inducted into the Vicksburg Warren School District's Athletics Hall of Fame. Now, in 2025, Millsaps College has honored him as a member of its Athletics Hall of Fame—a fitting recognition of his contributions to collegiate athletics and leadership on and off the field.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the remarkable life and accomplishments of M. Casey D. Younger, Sr. He is a shining example of the talent, discipline, and integrity that Mississippi produces and a role model for future generations.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MARK POCAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for two Roll Call votes on Monday, September 15, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

NAY on Roll Call No. 265, On Motion to Table the Motion to Discharge Committee of H. Res. 117; and YEA on Roll Call No. 266, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H.R. 3400.

#### HONORING HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

### HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I welcome to Washington His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians and the 270th successor to the Apostle Andrew.

Patriarch Bartholomew has long been a voice for faith, unity, and reconciliation, serving as the head of the second largest single Christian church globally. Along with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's admirable leadership and work within the Orthodox Christian church, his deep commitment to religious freedom, interfaith dialogue, and environmental stewardship was recognized this year with the Templeton Prize. The award is administered by the John Templeton Foundation in collaboration with the Templeton World Charity Foundation and the Templeton Religion Trust. By receiving this internationally recognized honor, he joins a distinguished group of past laureates that includes Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Beginning with the founding of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Houston in 1917, this visit is incredibly meaningful to the historic Orthodox Christian community within Texas, as well as Orthodox Christians all across America.

We are grateful for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's visit to Washington and for his lifelong dedication to bringing together people of different faiths to heed the call for stewardship of creation. I join my Greek Orthodox constituents and people of faith everywhere in offering him a warm welcome.

#### CONGRATULATING THE 2026 SOUTH DAKOTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDEE

### HON. DUSTY JOHNSON

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Becky Haenfeler of Avon School District, who has been named the 2026 South Dakota Teacher of the Year.

A graduate of University of South Dakota with a master's degree as a reading specialist, Mrs. Haenfeler has built a reputation as a teacher who not only educates but also transforms lives. She currently teaches English Language Arts to fifth, sixth, and seventh graders in the very school she once attended, even in the same classroom where she first discovered her love of reading.

For nineteen years, she has created a learning environment filled with energy, curiosity, and high expectations, inspiring students to connect with literature in ways that challenge and motivate them. Her dedication has left a lasting impact on both her students and her community.

As South Dakota Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Haenfeler will represent our state in the National Teacher of the Year program in Washington, D.C. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to extend my congratulations on this well-deserved honor and to express gratitude for her remarkable commitment to her students, community and teaching profession.

#### RECOGNIZING, HONORING, AND SUPPORTING THE AMERICAN COVID MEMORIAL

### HON. ROBERT GARCIA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize, honor and support the American Covid Memorial established by the U.S. Covid-19 Victims & Heroes National Memorial Foundation, as the 65th U.S. National Memorial. The memorial will serve as our Nation's solemn tribute of dignity and reverence to those we lost in the pandemic.

The U.S. Covid-19 pandemic is the deadliest human tragedy to occur in all 250 years of American History, with more than 1.2 million deaths. The scale of this tragedy is almost incomprehensible. Covid killed as many Americans as every war since the foundation of our country combined—twice as many people as the 1918 influenza pandemic and three times as many Americans as died in World War II. These are losses that every person in this country feels deeply, and it is a moment in history that will shape the United States for years to come.

In addition to remembering those we lost, the American Covid Memorial will serve to celebrate the 31 million heroes—16 million medical and 15 million non-medical, essential frontline workers—who bravely and selflessly worked to provide lifesaving healthcare, deliver supplies, and maintain vital community services during the pandemic. Their efforts saved lives and kept our country running.

The first recorded U.S. case of the new Coronavirus was reported January 20, 2020, in a 35-year-old American citizen traveling from Wuhan, China to his home in Snohomish County, Washington State.

On February 6, 2020, 57-year-old Patricia Dowd, a semi-conductor manufacturer in San Jose, California became the first confirmed U.S. Covid-19 death in the United States.

On March 13, 2020, U.S. Presidential Proclamation 9994 was issued declaring the Coronavirus pandemic a National Public Health Emergency.

On February 22, 2021, Proclamation 10148 was issued by the President of the United States recognizing 500,000 Covid-19 deaths, calling on the Nation to conduct a moment of national silence during a candle lighting ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial.

On May 12, 2022, the President of the United States issued Proclamation 10394 marking the tragic milestone of one million American lives lost to Covid-19, stating that "As a Nation, we must not grow numb to such sorrow. To heal, must remember.

On April 11, 2023, the President of the United States signed House Resolution 7—Public Law 118-3, declaring the Covid-19 National Public Health Emergency terminated.

National memorials are an American tradition to commemorate people and events of historical significance and, the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States is an event of profound historical significance. It is in the public interest to establish a National Memorial to remember the lives of those no longer with us and honor the incredible service to our country by heroes working on the front lines.

I ask my fellow Members of Congress and leaders across our country, to join me in supporting the dedication of an American Covid Memorial and to help build the U.S. Covid-19 National Registry of Victims and Heroes to help preserve the memories of the 1.2 million lives we lost.

#### WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

**HON. HERBERT C. CONAWAY, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

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

Known as the "Patriarch of Peace" by the Eastern Orthodox Church, he guides millions of faithful around the world in their spiritual journey and relationship with God. He has long championed interfaith dialogue, global peace, and religious tolerance. His presence reflects the deep ties between the Orthodox Christian community and the United States. His work has uplifted Eastern Orthodox Christians around the world, including many in New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District.

During this visit, Patriarch Bartholomew is being honored as the recipient of the Templeton Prize. This prestigious international award recognizes his scholarly contributions in exploring the intersection of faith and the natural world. Past recipients include Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama.

In 1997, he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his contributions

to the United States. His efforts have fostered dialogue among Christians, Muslims, Jews, and people of all faiths. His visit reminds us that our Nation is strongest when we work together in mutual respect, despite our differences.

Throughout his ministry, His All-Holiness has exemplified how faith can contribute to a just and peaceful planet. He has unapologetically spoken out against violence, international terrorism, and the degradation of the environment. He once stated, "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." In a time of global Turbulence, his visit marks a moment of deep significance for Orthodox Christians in New Jersey and across the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in welcoming His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States.

#### WELCOMING ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

**HON. PATRICK RYAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople to Washington, D.C. as he receives the Templeton Prize for his lifetime of work curating harmony between science and faith.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew not only serves as the spiritual leader to the upwards of 300 million Orthodox Christians around the globe, he serves as a model for us all, having dedicated his life to peacemaking, environmental advocacy and conservation, and facilitating inter-faith dialogue around the globe.

Leading the Church since 1991, His All-Holiness has shepherded our world through tumultuous shifts in national borders, been instrumental in orchestrating peace between adversaries, and facilitated harmony between religions. Throughout his tenure, he has remained on the forefront of meeting the rising challenges our global community is facing. Be it climate change, wars, violations of human rights, His All-Holiness is undaunted and unwavering in his commitment to alleviating suffering and championing justice.

During this chaotic time in our world, and especially our Nation, the Ecumenical Patriarch's presence in our capital is particularly meaningful and serves as a reminder to us all how to lead with compassion and courage, how to minister to our communities with empathy, and how to live with moral fortitude.

His ability to unify, to guide anyone and everyone to set aside differences and divisions and treat each other as equals is deeply inspiring and is what we should all strive for. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's impact on our world is immeasurable, boundless, and magnified all the more through the countless people he has inspired.

It is a great honor to add my voice to the many, including the Greek Orthodox Christians at St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Kingston, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Newburgh, Kimisis tis Theotokou Greek Ortho-

dox Church in Poughkeepsie, and across the Hudson Valley, thanking him for his leadership in our world, his zeal for environmentalism and social harmony, and his commitment to uplifting the dignity of every person of every faith and nation.

#### APPRECIATING CHARLIE KIRK

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, with the abysmal assassination of American Patriot Charlie Kirk on September 10, 2025, this tragedy inspired South Carolina Poet Tony Pichoff of Hopkins, South Carolina, with his heartfelt poem of Turning Point:

#### TURNING POINT

On this twenty-fourth eve of 9/11,  
One of Satan's minions  
Sent your faithful soul to Heaven.  
And in so doing,  
Sowed the seeds  
Of their undoing,  
On the road to reckoning and ruin.  
In this epic battle  
For the very soul of America,  
Never yielding  
To the terror of  
Those who seek to silence, you,  
The disarming bearer of  
God's good news.  
Wielding intellectual weapons  
Of well reasoned wisdom  
With calm confidence  
And articulate precision  
That did mortally threaten  
To undo the institution  
Insidiously dedicated  
To undermining our constitution.  
An unholy breeding ground  
Of hatred and division  
Infecting our very youth  
With lies disguised as truth.  
Administered via "higher learning's"  
Spiritual circumcision.  
In obedience to God,  
Upon these battle grounds  
You bravely trod,  
And did not do so in vain.  
For even in your very death,  
You delivered victory again!  
And just as the attack on 9/11  
Our national resolve did anoint,  
Your MAGA martyrdom  
Marks THIS historic turning point.  
And when 45 became 47,  
Just as certainly as then we knew,  
The tide continues to turn in our favor  
Now confirmed by you.  
As challenging as it may be,  
While we mourn we must also see,  
That it is through those like you  
We shall remain the indomitable land of the  
Free.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 16, 2025*

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 265, and YEA on Roll Call No. 266.