

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS,
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, it is an extraordinary honor to welcome His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, to Washington, D.C. We are grateful to receive not only the spiritual leader of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, but also a man whose life and ministry have embodied courage, compassion, and an unshakable commitment to peace and human dignity.

He was born Demetrios Arhondonis in 1940 on the island of Imvros in Turkey—most inhabitants of Imvros were Greek until the 1960's, when the Turkish government forced them to emigrate. In 1970, the Turkish government officially renamed Imvros to Gökçeada. Thus, Patriarch Bartholomew's journey has been marked from its earliest days by faith and perseverance in the face of religious persecution and nationalistic intolerance. Educated at the Theological School of Halki and later in Rome, Munich, and Switzerland, he distinguished himself in the fields of theology and canon law, becoming a respected scholar even before his ordination. In October 1991, he was elected the 270th Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, assuming the role of "first among equals" in the ancient Patriarchate founded by the Apostle Andrew.

Since that time, His All-Holiness has been called many things: the "Patriarch of Peace," the "Green Patriarch," and, above all, a bridge builder. For more than three decades, he has labored under extraordinary difficulties. In a region where the Orthodox community has suffered harassment and intimidation by Islamic extremists, he has stood steadfast, not only defending the faithful, but offering reconciliation to their adversaries. He has endured hostility, threats, and attempts to silence his office, yet his response has always been guided by the Christian virtues of forgiveness, humility, and love.

His All-Holiness has taken that witness far beyond the walls of the Patriarchate in Constantinople. He has convened dialogues among Christians, Muslims, and Jews, creating unprecedented opportunities for mutual understanding in the Middle East, one of the world's most divided regions, and beyond. From Libya to Syria, from Egypt to Azerbaijan, he has sought not confrontation, but instead "a dialogue of loving truth."

Mr. Speaker, His All-Holiness is not only a voice of principle, but a leader of action. He presided over the historic Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church in Crete in 2016, granted autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine in 2019, and continues to strengthen unity within the Orthodox world while opening channels of dialogue with the Catholic Church and other Christian traditions. His leadership is defined not by power or coercion, but by example—the examples of service, sacrifice, and fidelity to Christ's command to love our neighbor as ourselves.

As we welcome him, we are mindful that the challenges he faces are immense. Religious

freedom is often denied to Orthodox Christians—and under constraint in many of the lands they have inhabited for centuries. Christians and other minorities in many regions still face persecution.

I thank His All-Holiness for his witness, courage, and example. Washington welcomes him, not only as a guest, but as a brother, a teacher, and a peacemaker. May his visit strengthen the bonds between our peoples, and may his ministry continue to inspire us all to walk humbly, act justly, and love mercifully in the service of God and one another.

HONORING HALLIE COYNE

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Hallie Coyne and her service and contributions to Virginia's 1st District and the Nation.

Hallie joined my office in 2022 and quickly became one of the most effective and recognized personal office defense staffers in the House. As my National Security Advisor, Hallie has spearheaded numerous legislative efforts that delivered tangible results to the constituents of my district, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the country. Among her many accomplishments, Hallie spearheaded efforts to bolster the shipbuilding ecosystem in Virginia, strengthen commercial space launch infrastructure, bridge the gap between new defense start-ups and the Pentagon, and was a champion of defense technology and innovation.

Hallie has served as a mentor and leader for my legislative staff and the entire office, sharing her expertise and experience with the rest of my team. Her counsel and guidance have shaped my staff into the most effective and successful team on Capitol Hill.

I would like to thank Hallie for her many contributions and dedicated service over the last three and a half years. She is thorough, a true team player, and a spark in my office that will be dearly missed. Hallie has been an invaluable member of my team, and I wish her the best of luck as she moves on to the next chapter of her professional career.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I missed all the votes in the vote series on September 8, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 241, final passage of H.R. 3425, the POST Act; and YEA on Roll Call No. 240, final passage of H.R. 3424, the SPACE Act.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND
LEGACY OF KATHY LUKE

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Mrs. Kathy Chester Luke of Philadelphia, Mississippi. Mrs. Luke spent most of her life living in Philadelphia with her husband, Bob Luke, and always considered it home. Kathy was a devoted teacher who poured patience, encouragement, and a belief that the children she encountered would help shape a better future for their families and communities into every student who entered the doors of her classroom. The love Kathy showed to her students was a small glimpse into the selfless matriarch her family remembers her to be. Nothing brought Kathy more joy than seeing all her family gathered in one room. She loved to decorate for the holidays, travel with her husband, and play mahjong weekly with her friends.

Kathy's time as an educator impacted countless lives as she served as a selfless pillar of strength to her students and coworkers. Her life and legacy are forever marked with generosity, wisdom, and a deep love for others. I am honored to remember her legacy here today.

HONORING STABLE RECOVERY

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Suicide Prevention Month, I rise to honor Stable Recovery for their work around mental health, suicide, and addiction. Stable Recovery is a small, peer-driven, equine-focused rehabilitation program located in Kentucky. This program was launched on Taylor Made Farm in 2022 by co-founders Frank Taylor and Christian Countzler. Their vision was simple but powerful: to help individuals find strength and healing through the power of the horse, the principles of 12-step recovery, and the dignity of meaningful work.

The School of Horsemanship, created by Frank Taylor and built on decades of horsemanship knowledge, provides a 90-day residential program for education and healing. Residents find structure, discipline, and purpose as they learn equine care, farm work, financial independence and participate in daily therapy, support groups, and 12-step instruction. The goal was to not only allow residents to thrive and learn in recovery but to provide a natural employment pathway to jobs in the equine industry, an industry that needs more skilled talent.

The horse industry has been extraordinarily supportive. In just three short years, Stable Recovery has already seen lives transformed and exceptional growth. They credit their success to evidence based clinical practices, consistency of the program, mentorship, community and the healing power of horses. The men and women that have completed the program have reached milestones of sobriety. Many now live in recovery while working in the

equine industry. Stable Recovery's metrics exceed national norms. As of today, 80 percent of Stable Recovery's legacy graduates remain sober and are employed in the equine industry. Generous individuals and organizations, like HISA and Jockeys' Guild, believe in their mission. Their support has given residents a chance to recover at Taylor Made Farm and strategic partners have provided stable employment, allowing graduates to build lives of independence and purpose.

I am honored to recognize the work of Stable Recovery as we consider their incredible work for our community and what more can be done to prevent suicide in our Nation. We can heal people through horses, and in the process, create better lives, stronger families, and the opportunity of a bright future.

HONORING JOSEFINA LÓPEZ ON
THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CASA 0101 IN BOYLE HEIGHTS

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Josefina López, a playwright, artistic director, and community leader.

The daughter of a bracero, Josefina López immigrated to the United States from Mexico at the age of 5. Her family settled in Boyle Heights, where López grew up as an undocumented individual for 13 years until she was granted amnesty. López's experience as a Mexican, undocumented woman is what inspired her to write her acclaimed play *Real Women Have Curves*.

The play, which was later adapted into a film, is based on López's lived experience jug-

gling her family's expectations to work at their sewing factory, her dream of pursuing an education in New York, and the ever-present fear of immigration authorities entering their communities. Along with her other works, López has had over 100 productions of her plays performed in the United States.

At the start of her writing career, López was often the sole woman of color in the room, inspiring her to create a path for Latinos like herself to achieve success in the arts. In 2000, López founded CASA 0101 to, make this dream a reality by bringing theater and arts programs to the community she grew up in. For the last 25 years, the organization has produced hundreds of plays, provided free arts classes for young Angelenos, and supported the next generation of storytellers and artists. The impact of López's work can be felt from Boyle Heights to Broadway.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Josefina López.

WELCOMING ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. SUMMER L. LEE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and spiritual leader of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, to Washington, D.C.

This week, His All-Holiness is visiting our Nation's Capital to receive the Templeton Prize, the most prestigious international award in religion and science. With this honor, he joins the ranks of Mother Teresa, Archbishop

Desmond Tutu, and the Dalai Lama. The recognition reflects not only his scholarship and spiritual leadership but his unwavering witness for peace, human dignity, and care for creation.

For more than three decades as Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness has been a global voice for reconciliation among peoples of different faiths and traditions. He has also been one of the first religious leaders to insist that harming the environment is not simply a failure of policy but a moral failing. His leadership reminds us that stewardship of our planet is inseparable from justice for our communities.

His leadership has been honored across the world. In 1997, he received the Congressional Gold Medal here in the United States, and he has been recognized internationally as one of the most influential figures of our time. Yet the true measure of his ministry lies not in awards, but in his call for peace over division, compassion over violence, and responsibility over indifference. As he has said, "We have it in our power either to increase the hurt inflicted on our world or to contribute toward its healing. The choice is ours."

His life's work reminds us that building a better world depends on moral courage, the same courage we need to meet our own fights for justice at home.

The people of Pennsylvania's 12th District, including the faithful of the Presentation of Christ Greek Orthodox Church in East Pittsburgh and St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Pittsburgh, are proud to share in this welcome.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the extraordinary ministry of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and in congratulating him on this well-deserved honor.