

HONORING ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. JOHN JAMES

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. JAMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual head of the Orthodox Christian Church, the second largest Christian church in the world. This week, His All-Holiness is visiting the White House and members of Congress, and I am proud to join in recognizing his leadership.

Patriarch Bartholomew has been a tireless voice for peace, religious freedom, and human dignity around the globe. He is also a recipient of the prestigious Templeton Prize, joining the ranks of Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, individuals who have dedicated their lives to advancing humanity's purpose and moral compass.

Michigan, and especially Macomb County, is blessed with a vibrant Greek-American community. More than 7,200 residents in Macomb trace their heritage to Greece, with Sterling Heights home to the largest concentration. Within Macomb County alone, nearly 4,500 Greek Orthodox faithful gather in worship and service. Parishes like St. John Greek Orthodox Church and Assumption Greek Orthodox Church are not just places of faith, they are pillars of community life, strengthening families, serving neighbors, and preserving treasured traditions.

On behalf of Michigan's 10th District, I extend my gratitude and pride to His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew for his spiritual leadership and his enduring contributions to people of faith in Michigan, across America, and around the world.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VERNON
M. KRAWCZYK

HON. TONY WIED

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. WIED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Vernon Krawczyk, a devoted veteran, business owner, educator, and longtime resident of the Green Bay community.

Born on December 23, 1933, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to Zeno and Isabelle Krawczyk, Vern exemplified service and commitment throughout his life. A proud graduate of Central Catholic High School in 1952, he attended St. Norbert College before enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1954, serving honorably until 1957. He completed his degree at St. Norbert College in 1959 and married Judy Selissen on November 27, 1959, building a life rooted in family and community.

Vern and Judy operated the Skytop Supper Club from 1972 until their retirement in 2005, creating a cherished gathering place for the community. Vern's dedication to Green Bay was remarkable as he served as an adjunct instructor at NWTTC for over 15 years, teaching business, marketing, and responsible beverage service. His leadership extended to roles as president of the Brown County Tavern

League for over 20 years, former chair of the Brown County Republican Party, and member of the St. Vincent Hospital Advisory Council, the Bellevue Optimist Club, and the NEW Zoological Society's Tech Advisory Commission. He also served on the City of Green Bay's Protection and Welfare Committee and chaired fundraising for the Shy Ranch for Boys, further reflecting his commitment to education and youth. In his spare time, Vern enjoyed gardening, cooking, fishing, and deer camp, always with a focus on conservation. Through and beyond his hobbies, he touched countless lives with his warmth, generosity, and tireless work ethic.

Vern is survived by his wife, Judy, their three children, Patty, Steve, and John; eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, Vern Krawczyk's life was a testament to service, family, and community. His contributions have left an enduring impact on Green Bay, and his memory will continue to inspire us. I offer my deepest condolences to his loving wife Judy, family, friends, and the Green Bay community.

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

HON. SUSIE LEE

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Washington, D.C. He will be in our Nation's Capital this week after visiting New York City, where he will receive the distinguished Templeton Prize. The Templeton Prize was previously received by Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, among others.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is a world-leading advocate for interfaith dialogue and peace. As Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople for nearly 35 years, the Patriarch has taken on the most difficult issues facing the world, whether it's building bridges between East and West, protecting our environment, or fostering dialogue between religious faiths.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is also an international environmental leader and has earned the title "Green Patriarch." He consistently used his role to bring people of different faiths together to discuss how they could be good stewards of the Earth, and he made caring for the environment a central commitment in his role as spiritual leader. In 1997, the Patriarch even received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor awarded by this body.

On behalf of the vibrant Greek Orthodox community in Southern Nevada, I extend my deepest respects to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming him to our Nation's Capital.

RECOGNIZING MR. DAVID WIL-
LIAMS FOR RECEIVING THE
BEST COMMUNITY BANKING
AWARD FOR 2025

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize my friend, Mr. David Williams, for being awarded the Best Community Banking Award for 2025 by the Community Bankers of Michigan. This prestigious and well-deserved distinction reflects his dedication to Michigan's banking industry and his tireless contributions to communities throughout Michigan's 1st Congressional District.

Mr. Williams' long and distinguished career in banking began at a small community bank in Houghton, before spending 25 years working for larger financial institutions in Ohio and lower Michigan. Throughout those years, he remained committed to a personal goal: returning to the Upper Peninsula to manage and grow a community bank.

For the past 25 years, Mr. Williams has led Upper Peninsula State Bank with steadfast commitment to both customer service and community engagement. His passion for serving his community extends beyond his day-to-day work, as reflected in his advocacy for the industry at both the state and federal levels. In addition to his role as President and CEO, he serves as a Michigan Federal Delegate for the Independent Community Bankers of America and is a long-time member of FIS's Strategic Planning Advisory Council.

Mr. Speaker, let us join in recognizing Mr. David Williams for receiving the distinguished Best Community Banking Award for 2025. I thank him for his enduring commitment to Michigan's 1st Congressional District and his invaluable contributions to our great Nation.

CELEBRATING THE 80TH
BIRTHDAY OF JOSEPH ELDRIDGE

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the lifelong contributions of Reverend Joseph Eldridge, who celebrated his 80th birthday earlier this year. I have had the honor of knowing Joe for his selfless devotion to the causes of human rights and social justice over many decades, particularly with respect to Central and South America. Joe has been called a "servant-leader", which I think is a perfect way of describing the way he has offered his knowledge, his integrity, his hard work and his faith to lift up the poor, the sick and the oppressed, often at great risk to his own safety and security.

Throughout his life, Joe Eldridge has demonstrated his love of humanity and his respect for every person's dignity. He listened deeply and given wholeheartedly. From his earliest beginnings, growing up in Tennessee and inspired by his father, who was a Methodist minister, Joe has stood up for what is right. In a social environment that was filled with racism and fear, he believed in a God who is fundamentally loving and accepting. He became

active in the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960's and 1970's, and after attending seminary decided to expand his knowledge of the world by working as a missionary. He soon ended up in Santiago, Chile, where he endured the 1973 coup that deposed President Salvador Allende. As he began witnessing the abuses of the Pinochet regime and guiding foreign journalists to document them, his friends started disappearing. He returned to the United States to pursue a master's degree at American University's School of International Service.

Over the next two decades he piled up an impressive record of leadership by founding the Washington D.C. Office on Latin America, with which I have worked closely on so many issues, and directing the D.C. office of Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First). He also worked on Latin American rights for the United Methodist Church and got himself thrown out of Honduras for investigating abuses by its military junta.

In the 1990's and 2000's, Joe continued his passionate advocacy for human rights and justice through his service as a School of International Service professor and as American University's longest serving chaplain. He is known for transforming the Kay Spiritual Life Center into "a hub for social justice and courageous conversation on campus," and for bringing human rights and racial equity into the forefront of campus engagement. And it was not only in the university community that he performed his pastoral role—as a minister, he married legions of social activists and christened hundreds of their children. Whether it was weddings, funerals, or baptisms, Joe was always there for his community.

In recent years, he has also served as an active and generous member and officer of various boards and advisory committees, including those of the Center for International Policy, the Area Foundation, and the U.S. Institute of Peace. In each of these roles, Joe has brought not only his kind and gentle demeanor and his thirst for truth and fairness, but also a wealth of experience, wisdom and good judgment. His influence has been legendary and welcomed.

Joe is also a devoted husband and father who delights in spending time with his family. He has traveled widely with his loving wife, Maria Otero, and takes great pride in his three children, Justin, David and Ana, who lead their lives according to the values they learned from him.

As Joe retires from his boards and other formal duties, I hope my colleagues will join me in offering him thanks for a lifetime of service that has made the world a better place. I wish him many years ahead of good health and what our late, great colleague, John Lewis, called "good trouble".

LOWERING AGE AT WHICH A MINOR MAY BE TRIED AS ADULT FOR CERTAIN CRIMINAL OFFENSES IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SPEECH OF

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 5140, the D.C. Juvenile Sentencing Reform Act. This bill is not a serious attempt to address crime; it is a regressive, discriminatory, and counterproductive piece of legislation that will only worsen the challenges facing our communities.

This bill would lower the age at which children can be prosecuted as adults in Washington, D.C., from 16 to 14 years old for certain crimes. This will also have the impact of reducing the minimum age for transferring a juvenile to adult court to be tried as an adult. House Republicans from three states—South Dakota, Alaska, and California—voted to reduce the age to 14 in D.C., even though the age is 16 in their own states. The supporters of this bill claim it will make D.C. safer, but the facts and history prove otherwise.

First, let's talk about the discriminatory nature of this proposal. The juvenile justice system in Washington, D.C., already has stark racial disparities: more than 93 percent of youth arrests in the first half of 2025 were of Black youth. Lowering the age for adult prosecution will inevitably push more Black children into the adult system, a system that is not equipped to rehabilitate them.

Furthermore, this proposal stands in direct opposition to what we know about juvenile justice and public safety. Research from the CDC and the National Research Council has consistently found that transferring juveniles to the adult system increases violence rather than reducing it. Youth charged as adults are more likely to reoffend than those processed in juvenile courts. This is not a deterrent; it is a recipe for a cycle of violence and incarceration.

This bill would make Washington, D.C., an outlier in its approach to juvenile justice. While the current law already allows prosecutors to charge 16 and 17 year-olds as adults at their discretion, without a judge's approval, H.R. 5140 would lower that age even further.

Even in states with a history of tough-on-crime stances, many are moving in a more rehabilitative direction.

This approach aligns with a broader national trend, including in several Republican-led states, to reform juvenile justice with a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. For example, Texas, a state known for its traditionally tough stance on crime, has undertaken significant reforms since 2007. These reforms have focused on encouraging local, evidence-based supervision for low-level youth offenders, which has led to a significant reduction in the state-level committed population and millions of dollars in cost savings while protecting public safety. Juvenile arrests in Texas dropped by 27 percent between 2007 and 2011 following these changes.

Similarly, in Utah, Republican Governor Gary Herbert signed a comprehensive set of reforms in 2017 with near-unanimous support

from the Republican-led legislature. These reforms have also reduced reliance on locked detention by diverting more young people into community-based programs. Early outcomes from these changes show that the use of locked detention has fallen significantly, while the use of diversion is on the rise.

Even in Georgia, another state that has historically had a lower age for adult prosecution, there has been a movement to extend the juvenile justice system. In 2022, the state passed a bill to raise the adult criminal age from 17 to 18 for most crimes, recognizing that this provides adolescents with better opportunities for rehabilitation.

This bill would make Washington, D.C., an outlier. While the current law already allows prosecutors to charge 16 and 17 year-olds as adults at their discretion, without a judge's approval, H.R. 5140 would lower that age even further. In contrast, many states are moving in the opposite direction, raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction, not lowering it.

Real solutions to violent crime do not come from sending middle schoolers to adult court. They come from investing in communities. They come from supporting our schools, expanding after-school programs, providing job training, and ensuring access to mental health services.

I urge my colleagues to reject this misguided and dangerous bill. Vote No on H.R. 5140.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
CAPTAIN MATTHEW J. JERBI

HON. CHRISTOPHER R. DELUZIO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Mr. DELUZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Captain Matthew J. Jerbi, United States Navy, a resident of Fairfax, Virginia, who is retiring after 30 years of faithful service to our Nation following his commission from the United States Naval Academy.

After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1995, Captain Jerbi began his dedicated service to our Nation. Captain Jerbi served the Navy in a wide variety of roles over the next thirty years, both throughout the country and overseas.

His assignments include USS *Vincennes* (CG 49); USS *O'Brien* (DD 975); USS *Mustin* (DDG 89); USS *Normandy* (CG 60); Commanding Officer of USS *Independence* (LCS 2); Commodore of Destroyer Squadron 7; Director of Warfare Integration; Navy Unmanned Task Force; Deputy Chief of Navy Legislative Affairs; Director, Navy House Liaison Office; and as Special Assistant to the Chief of Navy Legislative Affairs.

Throughout his career, Captain Jerbi has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the country and has always striven to expand his education. In 2001, he earned a Master of Arts in National Security Affairs from the Naval Post Graduate School. His personal awards include the Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (five awards), and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (one award).

I commend Captain Jerbi for his dedication to our country and the sacrifices he and his