

All Holiness uses his authority to raise environmental awareness, and I'm proud to stand beside him to create sustainable future together. On behalf of my constituents and my colleagues here in Washington, I thank His All Holiness for his bravery, guidance, and testimony. I hope that his visit will bring us together in the spirit of service and encourage us to live with humility, fairness, and compassion.

CONGRATULATING MS. MARYAM AZARION ON HER RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 25 YEARS OF FEDERAL SERVICE

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated public servant. Ms. Maryam Azarion has given over 26 years of her career to serving our Nation's veterans and advancing scientific innovation across the federal government.

Maryam began her career as a microbiologist and inventor before finding her way to the law and federal service. She has dedicated her professional life to making government a force for good, one that drives progress and innovation and provides exceptional care to our Nation's veterans.

For nearly 20 years at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Maryam brought her expertise in science and the law to the VA's senior leadership. As a Staff Attorney for the VA's Office of General Counsel, Maryam was in charge of giving legal advice about research agreements, intellectual property licensing and smart phone application submissions.

After her first five years at the VA, Maryam saw an emerging need to create a legal team devoted to health research and innovation. Maryam was entrusted with the responsibility of nurturing the VA's first Specialty Team Advising Research (STAR), which she led with distinction from 2012 until her retirement this year. Her leadership at STAR has improved the quality of life for our Nation's veterans, spurred health care business development and encouraged innovation across our government.

Medical innovations are only lifesaving and life-changing if new technology and treatments can reach hospitals and clinics and if the veterans who need care can afford them. Maryam's vision and expertise helped facilitate the transfer of technologies developed within federal agencies to public, private and non-profit partners.

Maryam developed her expertise in technology transfer after beginning her career as a microbiologist and researcher at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. Discovering a passion for technology transfer and a talent for the intersection of science and the law, she lent her expertise to the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command and the Naval Research Laboratory.

A Marylander to her bones, Maryam prepared for this remarkable career at the Free State's world class colleges and universities. She's earned degrees at the University of Maryland-College Park, Hood College, and the

University of Baltimore School of Law. On behalf of a grateful Nation and the residents of Maryland's beautiful 8th District, I wish Maryam Azarion nothing but the best as she begins a new chapter in her life after her decades of federal service.

CELEBRATING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLORED MUSICIANS CLUB

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Colored Musicians Club, a historic beacon of light and entertainment in Buffalo, New York. As we honor this momentous occasion, may we reflect on the club's incredible history, its unwavering commitment to spreading African-American musical culture, and the transformative impact it has had on the lives of countless individuals throughout Western New York and across the globe.

Chartered on May 14, 1935, the Colored Musicians Club incorporated space for musicians to practice, rehearse and perform. The club, separate from their union, Local 533, gave members the opportunity to have a place to call their own in Buffalo, New York. Nearly six and half decades later, the Colored Musicians Club was designated a preservation site, and today, remains as the only operating African-American musicians club within the United States.

As the organization celebrates its ninetieth anniversary, providing a valuable opportunity to strengthen connections and further their mission "to stimulate its members to greater musical expression; to encourage and develop a fuller appreciation of music on the part of its members and the public; and generally to unite its members in the bonds of friendship, good fellowship and mutual understanding," they honor the legacies of members who came before them, cultivate long-lasting friendships, and inspire future generations of musicians to play and lead with unwavering dedication to their craft; ensuring that the spirit of music lives on through every note they play.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate ninety years of African-American musical culture, let us honor the countless musicians and guests who have been touched by the musical selections of those who performed. Congratulations to the Colored Musicians Club on this significant milestone. Their unwavering dedication to community members and visitors throughout Western New York will be seen, felt, and heard for generations to come, and we are all the better for it.

HONORING ISRAEL MARTIN AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Israel Martin is originally from Cuba, but now lives and serves

in the United States. He lives with his wife, Dody, with whom he has been married for 28 years. They have three children: Daniel, Claudia, and Helem. All three are married, and they have two granddaughters who are half-Cuban and half-Venezuelan, as well as one grandson who is also half-Cuban and half-Venezuelan.

In Cuba, Israel served as a pastor, Christian leader, and educator. He was the academic dean of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Havana, the oldest Evangelical seminary in the country, and founder and president of the Cuban School of Evangelical Studies (ECETE), the last seminary established in Cuba that was legally recognized. In the United States, he serves as pastor of the Hispanic Ministry of First Baptist Orlando, a mega-church of the Southern Baptist Convention, and as president of the Baptist University of Florida in Spanish. He also teaches doctoral-level classes at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Florida Christian University.

Israel obtained an engineering degree from ISPJAE in Havana and a bachelor's degree in theology and pastoral ministry from the Baptist Theological Seminary of Havana. He also pursued master's studies in Cuba and Guatemala. Finally, he is currently working on the dissertation phase of his third doctorate, a Ph.D. in Bible Exposition at Liberty University. Previously, he had obtained a Ph.D. in Theological Education at SETECA and a D.Min. in Hispanic Ministry Leadership at DTS.

Israel's favorite hobbies are reading and watching good movies. He also enjoys spending time with his family and home life.

HONORING JACKIE THOMAS, ALYSSA STYLES, AND MAKAYLA THOMAS

HON. CHUCK EDWARDS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Yancey County residents Jackie Thomas, Alyssa Styles, and Makayla Thomas for their extraordinary service and selfless dedication in the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

When disaster struck and resources were scarce, Jackie, Director of Yancey County Senior Center stepped forward. Under his leadership, the Senior Center became a hub for first responders working around the clock across the county. Recognizing the urgent need, Jackie organized meal preparation and distribution directly from the center, ensuring that our first responders had the strength and sustenance to continue their lifesaving work.

In the days that followed, Makayla and Alyssa arrived at the Senior Center seeking supplies. Seeing the effort underway, they immediately volunteered to help. Together, this small but determined team worked 18-hour days preparing meals, coordinating supplies, and supporting both first responders and neighbors in need. Their service was essential to the emergency response and serves as a shining example of the resilience and generosity that defines Yancey County.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deep gratitude to Jackie,

Makayla, and Alyssa for their leadership, compassion, and sacrifice. Their commitment to service reflects the strength of Yancey County and all of Western North Carolina. In honoring these remarkable individuals today, we also celebrate the enduring spirit of resilience that continues to sustain and strengthen our mountain communities.

HONORING ERNESTO NIETO,
FOUNDER OF THE NATIONAL
HISPANIC INSTITUTE, ON THE
OCCASION OF HIS 85TH BIRTH-
DAY

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a visionary leader whose life's work has left an indelible mark on the United States, Latin America, and the world, Mr. Ernesto Nieto, founder and president of the National Hispanic Institute (NHI). On the occasion of his 85th birthday, we commemorate not only the years of his extraordinary life, but also the enduring legacy he has forged for generations to come.

Son of civic activists and Methodist church leaders, Santos and Esther Nieto, Ernesto was born on October 6, 1940, in Houston, Texas. He and his brothers, Albert and Roy, grew up confronting racial discrimination firsthand, experiences that fueled his determination to join the civil rights movement and to create new pathways of opportunity for the Latino community. A proud graduate of Southwestern University, a talented basketball player ranking 23rd leading scorer in the nation, along with further graduate studies at the University of Houston, Mr. Nieto combined academic rigor with an unwavering commitment to being a cultivator of human potential, a steward of possibility, and a teacher of hope. His life reminds us that the truest measure of leadership is not in what we accumulate for ourselves, but in what we awaken in others.

In 1979, guided by that bold vision, Mr. Nieto founded the National Hispanic Institute to cultivate young Latino leaders. At a time when too many narratives focused only on deficits, Mr. Nieto charted a different course—one of possibility, strength, and aspiration. Under his leadership, NHI has engaged over 100,000 high-achieving students from across the United States and Latin America, partnering with more than 120 institutions of higher education.

Through NHI, he gave students the stage to discover their gifts, the structure to practice leadership, and the conviction to see themselves as architects of their communities' future. While NHI's roots are proudly grounded in the Latino community, its reach has expanded to a hemispheric scope. Today, NHI engages youth of every cultural background—from Nigerian American and Indian American families to young leaders across the Americas—all united by the common purpose of civic engagement, community life, and the pursuit of a stronger future.

For Mr. Nieto, leadership is not an abstract concept but a lived experience of community, family, and heritage. His philosophy is rooted in respect for the long history and traditions of

Latino leadership and in building systems that identify, nurture, and amplify the talents of young people. His groundbreaking book *Third Reality: Crafting a 21st Century Latino Agenda* captured this vision, underscoring the vital importance of cultivating leaders who embrace their cultural identity as an asset to American society and to the world.

Over the decades, Mr. Nieto's leadership has been recognized through countless honors. He has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award of Southwestern University, the Human Relations Award from the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and the Splete Award for Civil Rights from the National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities. He has been named a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Scholar, honored with the First Tee Award, and awarded the degree of Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from both Texas Wesleyan University and Austin College. Yet the deepest proof of his legacy lies not in titles or accolades, but in the thousands of NHI alumni now serving as public servants, educators, business leaders, and advocates across the globe.

Together with his co-founder and wife, Gloria De León, the lessons from his parents and supported by his children, Nicole, Roy, Marc and Chris, his extended De León family, and his beloved NHI familia, Ernesto Nieto has built an institution that does not merely train leaders but transforms futures. His impact resonates in classrooms and boardrooms, in communities from the Rio Grande Valley to Puerto Rico, from Chicago to Mexico City, and across continents—reminding us that the strength of a nation, and indeed the world, rests on the gifts of its people.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Ernesto Nieto's 85th birthday, we recognize a man whose vision and persistence created not just an organization, but a movement. His life affirms that when communities invest in their youth, they invest in their future. For generations to come, the National Hispanic Institute will stand as a living testament to his belief that Latino communities are assets to be celebrated and empowered.

On behalf of my colleagues in Congress, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Ernesto Nieto. May his example continue to inspire leaders for generations, and may his life's work remind us all of the enduring power of vision, faith, and relentless commitment to awakening the leaders already within us, and among us.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BAR-
THOLOMEW TO WASHINGTON,
D.C.

HON. JEFF HURD

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mr. HURD of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Washington, D.C.—the spiritual leader and *Primus inter Pares* (First among Equals) of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. For decades, he has been a tireless voice for religious freedom, and as the longest serving Archbishop of Constantinople in two millennia of Christian

history, he stands as a symbol of faith and resolve. His visit comes as he receives the distinguished Templeton Prize in New York, an honor once bestowed on Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Nelson Mandela—leaders whose lives have testified to the power of faith to transcend borders.

As a Catholic, I am deeply moved by the ties between our churches. His All-Holiness has met with Popes across generations, working to strengthen bonds of unity and to advance the cause of peace. Together, they have spoken with one voice: to defend the weak, serve those in need, and pursue reconciliation among nations. Patriarch Bartholomew is also a leading figure in interfaith dialogue among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. His presence here reminds us that faith has a vital role to play in protecting liberty and human dignity.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to welcome him to Washington and to thank him for his steadfast leadership in advancing religious freedom around the world.

RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER AS
CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS
MONTH

HON. LORI TRAHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and to highlight two bipartisan bills, the Give Kids a Chance Act and the BRAIN Act, that will help save lives. Cancer is a disease which affects nearly every household and community around the country, and nowhere is it more heartbreaking than when it affects our children.

This month marks an opportunity to raise awareness for childhood cancer and support research for new treatment and therapy avenues. Just this year alone, nearly 10,000 children will be diagnosed with pediatric cancer. This is an issue that could not be more important and pressing.

The Give Kids a Chance Act removes many of the hurdles and barriers to researching treatments for rare pediatric diseases. It restores FDA incentives through the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher Program, encouraging companies to develop drugs for rare childhood diseases. The PRV program has already helped develop new treatments for 200,000 patients spanning nearly 50 rare diseases. Muscular dystrophy, sickle cell, and tropical diseases have all seen medical breakthroughs during this program.

Give Kids a Chance will also reauthorize the FDA to take action against drug sponsors that fail to comply with pediatric study requirements. Thus, ensuring that patients get the latest and best treatments that they require. As Dr. Benjamin Ebert, President of Dana-Faber, said, "sustained federal investment is needed to ensure that every child has the opportunity for a life free from disease." This bill would cement that investment and sustain our leadership in biotechnology, while costing the taxpayer nothing.

Similarly, the BRAIN Act is another common-sense, bipartisan piece of legislation that