

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSIONER TRACY KRAFT-THARP

**HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tracy Kraft-Tharp of Jefferson County, Colorado for her service as a Jefferson County Commissioner.

Commissioner Kraft-Tharp's commitment to working across the aisle to find bipartisan solutions for the benefit of Colorado is truly remarkable. She dedicated her career to serving others, first as a public school teacher and then as a social worker at the Tennyson Center for Children. After seven years as a Colorado State Representative, she was elected to serve as a County Commissioner. Tracy used her experience as a small business owner to champion policies that help businesses and nonprofits in her community, including mentoring executive directors and expanding access to mental health services. Her dedication to improving the lives of every Coloradan is commendable, and her presence will be greatly missed.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Commissioner Tracy Kraft-Tharp for her time with the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners and sincerely thank her for her contributions to the Colorado community. I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING SHANTA KATIPAMULA FOR FOUR AND A HALF YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE

**HON. SUZAN K. DELBENE**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Shanta Katipamula for nearly five years of outstanding service to my office and the constituents of Washington's 1st Congressional District. Shanta joined my office in July 2020, and as someone raised in Washington, she ensured that the voices of those in our communities were front and center in our work. She has worked tirelessly on securing millions of dollars for our region through Community Project Funding (CPF) and has become known as the "CPF Queen." Shanta has been instrumental in many of my legislative efforts including securing bipartisan passage of the National Landslide Preparedness Act, which will help communities better prepare for natural disasters, saving the Redmond postal facility and protecting mail delivery for millions of King and Snohomish County residents, and advocating for en-

hanced standards and protections for wildlife as demonstrated in calling for the relocation of Tokitae, the beloved captive Southern Resident orca who was captured from the Puget Sound.

As our Legislative Correspondent and intern coordinator, Shanta ensured that every constituent received a timely response and served as a mentor to countless interns in our office. Shanta has been a trusted advisor and an invaluable member of our team. Her sharp intellect and commitment to public service have elevated our work and remind us all why we fight for our communities. She has made a lasting impact, and her legacy will continue to inspire our work for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Shanta Katipamula and wishing her the best in her next chapter.

HONORING THE SPIRIT OF KING AWARDEES AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA'S DR. MLK JR. PROGRAM

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the distinguished Spirit of King award-ees for this year's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Program, held at First Baptist Church of Vienna.

Dr. King's legacy continues to inspire global movements for justice and equality. His vision for a more just and inclusive society lives on through ongoing efforts to address racism, inequality, and human rights across the world. He is celebrated annually on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the United States, a reminder of his lasting influence on the fight for civil rights and social change.

The Spirit of King Awards are presented to individuals in Northern Virginia communities who embody the principles and spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. These awards honor those who work toward improving their communities, fostering equality, social justice, and unity—values that Dr. King championed.

The award-ees for this year are Nikki Brown, Deacon Dave Larrabee, and Rev. Becca Messman. Nikki Brown, founder of The Culture Cup, is a dedicated community advocate who spent a decade as a Fairfax County community outreach worker in Northern Virginia. During her time there, she uncovered the hidden African American history of Northern Virginia and realized its underappreciated significance. This discovery inspired Nikki to create a space where this heritage could be honored and celebrated. The Culture Cup is the realization of her vision, blending coffee and culture to preserve and showcase African American history in Northern Virginia. Nikki's determination and leadership have turned her dream into a vibrant reality, creating a hub where patrons can enjoy exceptional coffee

while immersing themselves in the rich tapestry of African American culture. Her legacy is a testament to the power of one individual's commitment to community enrichment and cultural preservation.

Deacon Dave Larrabee has served with the Lamb Center since February 19, 1999, in various capacities. The Lamb Center is a daytime drop-in shelter for individuals who are experiencing homelessness in Fairfax, Virginia. Dave was hired as Pastoral Assistant to launch the Saturday ministry in 2003. In 2004, he became Director of the daily operations of this ministry. Before the Lamb Center, he worked for the U.S. Department of Commerce from 1985 to 2000 and served 20 years in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserves. In May 2016, Dave graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg in the MAMS Diaconal Ministry program. He has been called by the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America to serve as a Deacon at the Lamb Center.

Rev. Becca Messman is the Senior Pastor at Burke Presbyterian Church. Becca helped launch a worshipping community of recent immigrants called Lunch for the Soul that has been used as a model for community engagement around the denomination. A prolific writer, she has served as Vice President of the Presbyterian Outlook magazine and co-authored "Cultivated Ministry," a book about church vitality. She also was Co-Chair of VOICE, Virginians Organized for Community Engagement. Rev. Messman remains committed to social justice through her community engagement and roles at Burke Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Nikki Brown, Deacon Dave Larrabee, and Rev. Becca Messman for their tremendous efforts as leaders in our communities while embodying the Spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DR. KEN COWAN

**HON. MIKE FLOOD**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. FLOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the life of Dr. Ken Cowan, M.D., Ph.D., whose remarkable service left a lasting impact on our communities.

A native of New York, Dr. Cowan was a Nebraskan by choice, who warmly welcomed and quickly embraced life as a proud Cornhusker.

At the Fred and Pamela Buffett Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, his visionary leadership helped create the largest public-private partnership in Nebraska's history.

Dr. Cowan's achievements reached far beyond Nebraska. He was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the National

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Cancer Advisory Board from 2002 to 2008, received the 2019 Appreciation Award from the Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska, and authored over 240 scientific papers. His work advanced the field of cancer treatment and improved lives Nationwide.

Drawing from his personal experiences with cancer, both as a physician and family member, Dr. Cowan brought empathy and compassion to patient care. Known for his warmth and approachability, his legacy endures in the lives he touched and the advancements he championed.

Nebraska's thoughts and prayers are with Dr. Ken Cowan's wife, Dr. Alison Freifeld, their two daughters, and extended family. His dedication to service and compassion will be dearly missed.

HONORING CAPTAIN JOHN  
"GIDDYUP" BUNCH FOR HIS  
WORK SERVING AMERICA'S VET-  
ERANS

### HON. ANDY HARRIS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Captain John "GiddyUp" Bunch for his extensive work serving America's military veterans.

A Marine veteran himself, Captain Bunch provided his first free fishing charter to an Army combat veteran in 2005, an outing that led to Bunch founding the non-profit organization Operation Open Arms.

Over several years, Capt. Bunch and Operation Open Arms facilitated unique recreational experiences for almost 4,000 service members, paid for more than 100 weddings for veterans, and provided a broad array of other services to our nation's heroes.

Bunch's devoted, tireless, and effective work through Operation Open Arms provided a vital service to his brothers and sisters in arms by welcoming them home, showing them the gratitude of their communities, and frequently by directly meeting their needs.

On behalf of the People of the Maryland's First Congressional District, I would like to express sincere thanks and appreciation to Captain Bunch for his tireless efforts and work.

RECOGNIZING PARK COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER DICK ELSNER

### HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Richard "Dick" Elsner of Park County, Colorado for his service to the people of Fairplay, Alma, Bailey, and other rural communities, on the Park County Board of County Commissioners.

During his time in office, Commissioner Elsner, worked across regions and party lines to help the people of Park County. He has been dedicated to ensuring that rural communities have a voice at the state and federal levels. As Vice Chair of the Central Front Range Transportation Region, he secured

funding for a \$3.5 million transportation hub in Fairplay. He also played a key role in seeking to re-establish healthcare access to Park County, a community that has been underserved for decades. His dedication to public service has left a mark on Colorado, and his presence will be missed.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Commissioner Elsner for his time with the Park County Board of County Commissioners and sincerely thank him for his contributions to the Colorado community. I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF  
SLEEPY EYE MAYOR WAYNE  
PELZEL

### HON. BRAD FINSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Wayne Pelzel, a friend, public servant, and fellow southern Minnesotan who is retiring from eight years of service as the Mayor of Sleepy Eye.

Since his election in 2016, Wayne has faithfully served the people of Sleepy Eye and the greater Brown County community, working alongside the city council and city staff to understand the needs of its residents and improve the lives of those who call Sleepy Eye home.

In his two terms as mayor, Wayne oversaw a period of growth and revitalization for Sleepy Eye, bringing new life to Main Street, welcoming new businesses to town, expanding housing, and growing the city's recreational opportunities.

While Wayne leaves behind big shoes to fill, his tenure of dedicated service to the City of Sleepy Eye will be remembered by all of us for years to come.

I congratulate Wayne on his well-deserved retirement. I thank him for his leadership and his service to our southern Minnesota community. I wish Wayne and Pattie all the best in this next chapter.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, due to illness, I was unable to vote on January 7, 2025. Had I been able to vote, I would have voted: No on Roll Call No. 6, H.R. 29—The Laken Riley Act.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. JOSH BRECHEEN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. BRECHEEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained because of family obliga-

tions and was unable to cast my vote on H.R. 29 and H.R. 23. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 6, and YEA on Roll Call No. 7.

HONORING JUDGE ROBERT L.  
DOYEL FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE  
CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY

### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Robert L. Doyel served his country with the U.S. Navy at Vietnam, where he oversaw meals for 10,000 soldiers, and as a Circuit Court Judge in Central Florida from 1995 through 2010.

Judge Doyel's passion for the underdog was a result of his humble upbringing in Shawnee, Oklahoma, as the youngest of Ruby Doyel's 10 children—and the only one to graduate college. After one winter living with his family in an old chicken coop, Judge Doyel worked through high school and college, graduating from the University of Oklahoma with degrees in Accounting and Law. He was an attorney in Oklahoma before becoming a law professor at Ole Miss, where colleagues included former Washington NFL star and future Ole Miss Chancellor Robert Khayat, and students included future novelist John Grisham.

When he registered his son Gregg for youth baseball in 1978 in Oxford, Mississippi, Judge Doyel learned the city Civic League was still segregated. Having already committed to coaching, Judge Doyel stayed that summer but made it his mission to destroy the league. He recruited other white families in 1979 to the Oxford Parks Commission, and the segregated league soon folded.

Judge Doyel earned his Masters of Law and Doctorate of Juridical Science degrees from the University of Wisconsin in 1984, and taught at Mercer's School of Law before moving to Winter Haven, Florida. He was a defense attorney, then a Circuit Judge specializing in family law. The title of his book on the subject brims with his fearless personality: "The Baby Mama Syndrome".

In retirement with Chelle, his wife of 37 years, Judge Doyel advised local Democratic Party leaders, served on the board for the Rainbow Ridge LGTBA Democratic Caucus of Polk County, and advocated fiercely for rape-kit testing and victims of domestic violence.

Judge Doyel died November 1, 2024, at age 79.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 9, 2025*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for Roll Call Vote No. 3, Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 5, I would have voted Nay.

Had I been present for Roll Call Vote No. 4, Motion to Commit H. Res. 5, I would have voted Yea.

Had I been present for Roll Call Vote No. 5, Agreeing to H. Res. 5, I would have voted Nay.