

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY  
OF H. E. CHRISTIAN “CHRIS”  
PEEPLS

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of H. E. Christian “Chris” Peeples, a dedicated public servant and tireless advocate for public transit whose decades of service improved the lives of countless residents in the East Bay and beyond.

Chris Peeples was first appointed to the AC Transit Board of Directors in November 1997 to fill one of the District’s two At-Large Board positions. He went on to earn the trust of voters time and again, being elected in 1998 and re-elected in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020. Over the course of his distinguished tenure, he represented Ward 1—including Albany, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Richmond, San Pablo, and the surrounding unincorporated communities—with energy, vision, and compassion.

A longtime champion for transit riders, Director Peeples was deeply engaged in the AC Bus Riders Union, Alliance for AC Transit, Regional Alliance for Transit, Alliance for Sensible Transit, and the Coalition for a One Stop Terminal, among many other groups. His commitment extended beyond the Bay Area, as he actively participated in the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies and the American Public Transportation Association, where he elevated local priorities to national and international conversations.

Director Peeples was especially devoted to advancing clean transportation and was a strong proponent of AC Transit’s groundbreaking zero-emission fuel cell bus program. He spoke at and moderated panels across the country and abroad, promoting hydrogen and zero-emission transit as solutions to climate change and air pollution.

Chris was also a pillar of civic life, serving on the Oakland Ethics Commission and numerous community and political bodies. A graduate of Crown College, University of California at Santa Cruz, and Hastings College of the Law, he combined his intellectual rigor with a passion for equity and sustainability.

Christian Peeples leaves behind a legacy of advocacy, innovation, and public service that will endure for generations. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring his extraordinary life and in extending our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and the community he served so faithfully.

HONORING THE 120TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE SAINT GEORGE  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 120th anniversary of the founding of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church.

For over a century, St. George has been at the heart of New Hampshire’s Greek Orthodox

community and has served as a spiritual and cultural hub for generations of New Hampshire families. St. George has witnessed every season of life for its parishioners and has remained a constant presence for generations.

My own family has been part of this community and this parish for years. I am grateful for those who have taught me so much about my Greek heritage and culture. These are lessons that I carry with me each and every day.

Consecrated as a cathedral in 1970, St. George took on a new role within the Greek Orthodox faith, and it continues to serve as a vital connection to the larger Orthodox community. In addition to serving the spiritual needs of parishioners, St. George has been dedicated to enriching the lives of so many in the Greater Manchester area through youth programs, community events, Sunday and Greek School, basketball, and more.

For much of its history, St. George has opened its doors for festivals like Glendi and welcomed thousands of visitors of all faiths and backgrounds to enjoy authentic Greek food, culture, and history. The Anagenesis Ladies Society also remains devoted to taking on religious, cultural, and humanitarian efforts that are at the heart of the Church.

On behalf of the constituents of New Hampshire’s First Congressional District, I congratulate the Saint George Greek Orthodox Church on achieving this incredible milestone. I thank them for the work done by so many to make Manchester and New Hampshire a better place.

HONORING THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MICHIGAN DETROIT CENTER

**HON. RASHIDA TLAIB**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District proudly celebrates a significant achievement: the 20th anniversary of the University of Michigan Detroit Center on Woodward Avenue, right in the heart of Detroit.

For two decades, this space has become a hub for grassroots community organizing and education. Programs like “Semester in Detroit” have created a mutually beneficial relationship, allowing my office to mentor talented young college students while also gaining valuable support from their work as interns. By supporting education and leadership in Detroit, these programs help build stronger, more inclusive, and thriving communities.

As we celebrate 20 years, I look forward to many more years of partnership and progress together.

RECOGNIZING MRS. SHIRLEY KNOX  
BENTON

**HON. MARC A. VEASEY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable legacy of Mrs. Shirley Knox Benton, a pioneering educator whose leadership and vision broke barriers as the first female principal in her community.

Throughout her distinguished career, Mrs. Benton dedicated herself to creating opportunities for young people, ensuring that every student had access not only to quality education but also to the encouragement and support needed to succeed. Her historic appointment as the first woman to lead a school as principal paved the way for generations of women to follow in her footsteps, serving as a beacon of progress and possibility.

Mrs. Benton’s leadership extended beyond the classroom. She championed innovation in education, built meaningful partnerships with families and communities, and instilled in her students a lasting sense of discipline, perseverance, and hope. Her contributions have had a profound and enduring impact, shaping not only the schools she led but also the countless lives she touched.

Today, we celebrate Mrs. Shirley Knox Benton not only for her historic achievement but also for her unwavering devotion to education and the advancement of future generations. Her example continues to inspire, reminding us of all of the power of determination, service, and trailblazing leadership.

I congratulate Mrs. Benton on a legacy that she will endure for many more years through the lives of those she guided and inspired.

RECOGNIZING ANNISSA FRAGOSO

**HON. ADAM GRAY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. GRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Anissa Fragoso, Director of the Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, for her service and accomplishments as she retires after a decade of service to the MCHCC.

Anissa Fragoso was born and raised in the City of Tracy and moved to the community of Merced in 1995 where she has resided for 30 years. She earned her Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from Merced Community College in 2012. Ms. Fragoso has owned the Farmers Insurance Agency in downtown Merced, with more than 20 years of insurance expertise.

During her tenure at the Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Fragoso helped secure an ARPA grant as part of the Re-open Merced Businesses initiative. She was instrumental in another grant for the Arts Community to host 2 Art Corners, where local artists participate and are paid. Under her watch, the MCHCC launched Vamanos Magazine which showcased Merced’s agricultural landscape, small businesses, and local activities.

In 2022 and 2023, Ms. Fragoso’s work allowed the MCHCC to partner with Mayor Matthew Serratto to host an annual Mayor’s Ball that would raise over \$50,000 distributed to local non-profits within the City of Merced.

She was a co-collaborator of the Mercado Night Market with the City of Merced, designed and created by Gil Cordon. This post-pandemic creation assists the small business community and Arts Community who suffered during the economic challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The MCHCC assisted in 150 micro-businesses, artisans and brick and mortar stores getting the licensing needed to do

business legally and be part of the Mercado. This Mercado Night Market has become a community staple for five consecutive years.

She also served on the board of directors for the Kids Discovery Station, a museum dedicated to children and currently sits on the board for the Merced Main Street Association.

During her professional career, she has been recognized with many awards, most recently the Minerva Empresaria Award 2022 from the California State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce which recognizes businesswomen who empower others by leading with wisdom and passion.

Please join me in honoring Anissa Frago for her dedication, commitment and selfless service to the people of Merced County.

HONORING ANGELA G. REYES

### HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District honors an exceptional leader in our community, Angela G. Reyes of Southwest, Detroit. Angela Reyes is a proud Latina and always centered her work on human dignity and rights of immigrant neighbors. Her legacy as the founder and Executive Director of the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC) is nothing short of extraordinary, and her impact will continue to resonate for generations to come.

Since founding DHDC in 1997, she has been a beacon of hope and transformation for the Southwest Detroit community. Angela's tireless dedication to youth violence prevention and community empowerment has saved lives but also created opportunities for countless individuals to thrive. She has been active in community organizing in Southwest Detroit for over 30 years and has received several awards. She is known globally as a consultant and speaker on issues affecting the Latino community, including cultural awareness, immigration, and education.

The 12th Congressional District extends our deepest gratitude for her vision and courage. Her legacy will continue to inspire those who follow in her footsteps, and her contributions will forever be a cornerstone of DHDC's mission. We wish her all the best in this next chapter of her journey, knowing that her impact will continue to shine brightly.

HONORING THE CITY OF  
GONZALES BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

### HON. MICHAEL CLOUD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the historic City of Gonzales, Texas, as it celebrates 200 years since its founding in 1825. Named by James Kerr after Governor Rafael Gonzales of Coahuila and Texas, this settlement was briefly abandoned and later rediscovered in 1832 by Byrd Lockhart and has grown into a cornerstone of Texas' enduring history.

Gonzales is renowned as the birthplace of the Texas Revolution, where the defiant "Come and Take It" rally cry first echoed. When Mexican soldiers were sent to retrieve a cannon from the small settlement, a small cohort of men successfully resisted in what is now called the Battle of Gonzales. This heroic stand showcased the unyielding courage and determination of its people—qualities that continue to define the city today. It was this cannon that fired the first shot for Texas' Independence, and today, because of it, the city stands as one of the oldest settlements across the entire state.

Just years later, when William Travis sent out a plea for reinforcements at the Alamo, 32 men from Gonzales were the only ones to answer the call. All of these men lost their lives and today are honored as the "Immortal 32" for their heroism in fighting for freedom and to overthrow an oppressive government.

After the Texas Revolution, Gonzales would rebuild and later become an agricultural hub, reflecting the sacrifices and hardships of Texans on the frontier. Thanks to cattle ranching and this agricultural production, Gonzales helped spur the growth of the larger Texas economy.

The story of Gonzales is one of courage and resilience in the face of hardship and toil. Today, the town continues to embrace its rich history and maintains the Texas spirit through its museums, historical sites, and traditional celebrations. As we mark this historic milestone, I congratulate the city of Gonzales on its bicentennial and honor the enduring legacy of resilience and strength that it represents. Representing this city and its people in Congress is a great honor and privilege.

CELEBRATING THE 70TH WEDDING  
ANNIVERSARY OF DENNIS AND  
IRENE KOUDELKA

### HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in celebration of the 70th wedding anniversary of Dennis and Irene Koudelka.

Mr. and Mrs. Koudelka exchanged their vows on July 30, 1955, at St. Gerard Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas. The couple exchanged their vows after Mr. Koudelka returned from the Korean war, where his heroic actions awarded him a Bronze Star at the Battle of Pork Chop Hill. Mr. Koudelka served our Nation in the United States Army for eight years, where he was Active Duty from 1952 to 1954 and a reservist from 1954 to 1960.

Mr. and Mrs. Koudelka have two children, Mrs. Debbie Hannasch and Mr. Steve Koudelka. They are the grandparents to Mrs. Amanda Pawkett and the great grandparents to Reed and Rylie Pawkett.

Mr. and Mrs. Koudelka dedicated themselves to serving the community. At St. Luke's Catholic Church, Dennis coached football and flag football for the parish's Catholic Youth Organization teams. Irene served as the church's area chairwoman. She also served as the Hillcrest neighborhood chairwoman, in addition to being her daughter's Girl Scout Brownie leader.

Seventy years after they exchanged their vows, they are still creating memories with

their family, friends and loved ones. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Dennis and Irene Koudelka's 70 years of marriage—their love story is one of admiration, respect, hope and joy.

HONORING STEVE SPREITZER

### HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District honors Steve Spreitzer for his decades of bringing our communities together. His love for interfaith work shined through with his work at the Michigan Roundtable for Just Communities. For over forty years, Steve has dedicated his life's work to advancing racial equity, building bridges across equity divides, and uplifting the voices of those too often left out of the decision-making that directly affects them. His steady and compassionate leadership guided the Roundtable through times of challenge and transformation, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire us all.

Under his leadership, the Michigan Roundtable has become a hub for justice, dialogue, and action, forming coalitions, strengthening partnerships, and creating programs that brought communities together to confront systemic racism and discrimination. His vision has paved the way for a new generation of leaders who will continue this vital work.

On behalf of Michigan's 12th District, I thank Steve for his extraordinary service. His impact will echo through our communities for years to come and inspire all who fight for justice, equity, and workers' rights. We wish him well in his retirement.

RECOGNIZING 30 YEARS OF ART  
ON THE AVENUE

### HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 30th anniversary of Art on the Avenue, an annual celebration held each fall in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia. For three decades, this esteemed event has served as a cultural touchstone, welcoming visitors from throughout the greater Washington, D.C., area and exemplifying the spirit of artistic expression and community engagement.

Since its founding, Art on the Avenue has attracted tens of thousands of attendees each year. The festival features the work of more than 300 artist vendors, musical performances across four stages, family-friendly activities, and an array of cuisine from local restaurants and eateries. These offerings have enriched the community, fostered creativity, and supported local businesses.

Art on the Avenue is consistently recognized as one of Virginia's premier festivals, earning repeated distinction as "Best of Virginia Festivals" by Virginia Living Magazine. Its enduring popularity and acclaim reflect the dedication of the organizers and the appreciation of the participants.