

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.

I wish to recognize and extend my deep appreciation to Pat Miller, the founder of Art on the Avenue, for her exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication to this event. The long-standing success of Art on the Avenue has been made possible by Pat's vision and commitment.

I also want to offer special recognition to the local businesses that sponsor the festival each year, and to the hundreds of volunteers whose steadfast efforts ensure its continued excellence and vitality.

In commemorating this milestone anniversary, I encourage my colleagues to join me in celebrating Art on the Avenue and the profound contributions it has made to the cultural life and community spirit of Northern Virginia and the entire Commonwealth.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR INTERIM APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS AND RELATED AGENCIES WITH RESPECT TO ANY FISCAL YEAR FOR WHICH APPROPRIATIONS ARE NOT OTHERWISE PROVIDED FOR SUCH COURTS AND AGENCIES

### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, this week, I introduced a bill that would exempt from Federal Government shutdowns the Federal and independent agencies that are exclusively or primarily federally funded but have jurisdiction over local District of Columbia civil and criminal justice matters. This bill is modeled on a provision I have gotten enacted each year since the 2013 Federal Government shutdown to exempt the D.C. government from Federal Government shutdowns.

This bill would exempt the following agencies from Federal Government shutdowns: the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for D.C., the D.C. Courts, the D.C. Public Defender Service, the D.C. Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure, the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission and the D.C. Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. With one exception, these agencies are not under D.C.'s control. These agencies provide critical local services to D.C., including law enforcement, and should continue to function as usual during a Federal Government shutdown.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JEFFREY  
"JT THE GREAT" THOMAS

### HON. RASHIDA TLAI

OF MICHIGAN  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today, the 12th Congressional District honors the life and legacy of Jeffrey "JT the Great" Thomas, a beloved Detroit, entrepreneur, and family man whose impact reached far beyond his community. Mr. Thomas co-founded Sweet Potato Sensations, transforming a dream

that began with cookies sold from the trunk of his car into a Detroit staple, a family table where neighbors could feel at home.

Beyond business, Mr. Thomas' life was full of laughter, competition, and love. From golf outings with his daughters, basement parties, cook-offs, and spirited games of Bid Whist, he poured joy into every moment. A man of faith, he embraced his role as a teacher and scholar.

Above all, Mr. Thomas took great pride in his family, nearly 49 years of marriage to Cassandra and their daughters, Charisse "Reese Pooh" and Jennifer "Jenny Loops." His legacy of love, family, hustle, and faith will inspire our community for generations.

APPRECIATING THE PRESENCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

### HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my gratitude towards His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Archbishop of Constantinople and spiritual leader of Orthodox Christianity worldwide, for his time spent in our Nation's Capital last week. On behalf of the strong Eastern Orthodox community I represent in Michigan's 11th Congressional District, I enthusiastically congratulate His All-Holiness on receiving the 2025 Templeton Award.

This award underscores his ground-breaking environmental advocacy and unique ability to merge both scientific and spiritual discourses. His All-Holiness has exemplified a sense of responsibility towards coming generations: to preserve, protect, and promote the health of the planet on which we are honored to live.

Beyond his environmental advocacy, His All-Holiness has been an unwavering pillar in support of intersectionality, working to foster relations between devotees of Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim faiths. He has been relentless in his pursuit to prevent violence on the basis of religion, to ensure the humane treatment of all, and to join hands across the world in seeking peace and justice.

In Oakland County, we are blessed with a thriving Orthodox Christian community. As their Representative in Congress, I am thrilled His All-Holiness joined us in Washington, D.C., last week. His visit reminds us to be constantly kind and collaborative, one that is much needed during this time.

Please join me in thanking His All-Holiness for his visit and congratulating him on this well-deserved award.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN D. LAVELLE

### HON. BEN CLINE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 3, 2025*

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the late General John D. Lavelle who was born on this day in 1916.

Jack Lavelle was one of the early investors in Bryce Resort in Basye, Virginia. He worked hard to keep Bryce solvent in those days, and contributed to turning it into the member-owned resort it is today. Jack served in the Air Force all over the world, but thought the Shenandoah Valley was the most beautiful place he'd been to.

On the eve of war in 1939 he enlisted as an aviation cadet in the Army Air Corps and received pilot training at Randolph and Kelly Fields, Texas. He received his pilot wings and a commission as a second lieutenant in June 1940.

During World War II he saw combat in the European theater of operations, where he served with the 412th Fighter Squadron. Following the war, he was assigned to Wright Field, where he was one of the two Air Corps officers who negotiated with all seven Army Technical Services and wrote the agreements for the division of assets and the operating procedures to be affected during the buildup of the Air Force.

As a career airman with a 32-year reputation as being a smart, hardworking leader, he was promoted to four star general and assigned Commander of the Seventh Air Force in Vietnam on August 1, 1971. In April 1972, General Lavelle was removed from command as a result of allegations that he ordered unauthorized bombing missions into North Vietnam, and that he authorized the falsification of reports to conceal the missions. General Lavelle was retired in the grade of major general, two grades lower than the last grade he served on Active Duty. General Lavelle always maintained his innocence until his death on July 10, 1979. On this day of that year, his widow Mary Josephine McEllin Lavelle dedicated a flagpole with base and flag, and a plaque in his honor at Bryce, which is still there today.

In 2007, newly released and declassified information disclosed that General Lavelle was authorized by President Richard Nixon to conduct the bombing missions. In light of the new information, his widow made a request to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records for the restoration of his grade to general, his last grade while on Active Duty.

On August 4, 2010, President Barack Obama nominated General Lavelle posthumously for promotion back to the grade of general on the Air Force retired list based on the information that he had been authorized by President Richard Nixon to conduct the bombing missions. Further, the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records found no evidence that General Lavelle caused, either directly or indirectly, the alleged falsification of records, or that he was even aware of their existence. Unfortunately, the Senate Armed Services Committee returned the nomination, and still to this day will not allow the full restoration of his grade to general.

Jack Lavelle served the country outstandingly over his entire career. He and his wife "Jo" were heartbroken when he was removed from command and forced out of the Air Force that they had grown up with and were so proud of. But they found some solace in retirement in the beauty and peace of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. General USAF (Ret.) Jack Lavelle is recognized by me today as an honorable and patriotic American and we remember him today as such on the anniversary of his birthday, September 9, 1916.