

crimes, though presidents rarely do so. D.C. residents deserve a say in whether their fellow residents deserve mercy. In the 117th Congress, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform passed this bill as part of the District of Columbia Home Rule Expansion Act of 2022 (H.R. 8861).

While D.C. law appears to give the mayor authority to grant clemency for certain D.C. crimes (D.C. Code 1–301.76), under current practice, clemency petitions for D.C. crimes, like federal crimes, are submitted to the Department of Justice for the president's consideration.

The states and territories have full control over their criminal justice systems, including clemency. D.C. also should have full control over its criminal justice system. Since the D.C. Council has authority to enact local D.C. laws, D.C. officials are in the best position to grant clemency for D.C. crimes. This bill would give D.C. authority to use any type of clemency system.

This bill is an important step in expanding D.C. home rule. I urge my colleagues to support it.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER FEARON
AS A DISTINGUISHED FIRST RESPONDER LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, earlier this summer in Altamonte Springs, while off-duty and spending time with his family, Firefighter and Paramedic Christopher Fearon witnessed a five-year-old boy slip under the water and begin to drown. Within seconds, he pulled the child out, cleared his airway, and helped him take a lifesaving breath. The boy was purple in the face and struggling to breathe, but thanks to Chris's training, instinct, and calm under pressure, he survived and recovered.

Chris embodies: Skill and decisiveness under pressure—drawing on years of fire-rescue and paramedic training; Service beyond duty—never hesitating to act, even off the clock; Humility and compassion—later reflecting, “All I wanted to do since I was little was help people . . . and I love it.” This act of quick thinking heroism, covered by local news, not only saved a life but also drew attention to the importance of water safety in Central Florida. The boy has since received a scholarship to learn to swim, creating a ripple effect of safety and prevention beyond the incident itself.

RECOGNIZING OCTOBER AS NATIONAL SPINE HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JAMES R. WALKINSHAW

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing October as National Spine Health Awareness Month.

In the U.S., 100 million people suffer from neck or back conditions every year according to the CDC. Back pain is the number one cause of missed workdays, the leading cause of job-related disability and pain in the U.S., and the most common non-cancer related reason for an opioid prescription in the U.S. In addition, those with back and neck pain are four times more likely to become clinically depressed.

The National Spine Health Foundation, located in my district in Reston, Virginia, is the only national patient-centered non-profit dedicated to helping patients overcome debilitating spinal conditions and take back their lives. For over two decades, the Foundation has increased its commitment to and has developed award winning patient education, advocacy, and research work to give patients the tools they need to make informed decisions about their spine health and navigate their own treatment journeys with confidence.

To further address the complex challenges of spinal health, the Foundation has created four specialized task forces led by experts in their fields.

The Opioid Task Force which has advanced research on minimizing opioid use while still optimizing pain relief.

The Bone Health Task Force promotes bone health screening protocols, research, and public education.

The Military & Veterans Task Force works to ensure that service members and veterans receive advanced, appropriate spine care.

Finally, the Motion Preservation Task Force ensures patients and providers have access to lifechanging motion-preserving procedures, focusing on artificial disc replacement.

The Foundation continues to be strongly committed to spine health research. Patient reported outcomes have long been part of fabric of NSHF since its inception. As they are deeply invested in supporting evidence-based healthcare decisionmaking, it is important to be part of the process of creating the evidence. Their cloud-based research tool called ‘Spine-online’ enables them to conduct multicenter studies and partner with research teams both in the U.S. and internationally. Active studies are currently occurring on robotic surgery, enhanced surgical recovery, augmented reality, a genetic basis for personalized spine treatments, stem cell therapy, and more.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the importance of good spinal health and thanking the NSHF and the healthcare providers who help spine and neck patients, not just in October, but all year long.

RECOGNIZING THE TOMBIGBEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the completion of Tombigbee Electric Cooperative's commitment to bring reliable, high-speed fiber internet access to more than 100,000 residents in Northwest Alabama.

Tombigbee Electric Cooperative was established to meet the need for electricity among

citizens in the rural areas of Northwest Alabama. Since its founding in 1941, Tombigbee has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to serving its community and strengthening the area it surrounds. Over the decades, the cooperative has provided safe and provide safe and reliable electric power and fiber-to-the-home internet.

In 2017, Tombigbee Electric Cooperative set forth an ambitious goal to provide high-quality, high-speed internet service to 100,000 people across Northwest Alabama. Today, that goal has been achieved.

Through the installation of more than 4,200 miles of fiber and a total investment of \$145 million, made possible by \$37 million in state and federal grants, as well as a \$100 million investment by the cooperative itself, Tombigbee Electric Cooperative has delivered on its promise to bridge the digital divide for rural Alabamians.

Mr. Speaker, this milestone represents more than the completion of a project, it signifies a lasting investment in the prosperity and potential of rural communities. Thousands of citizens will now reap the benefits of this achievement, including expanded educational opportunities, strengthened economic development, improved access to health care, and an enhanced quality of life for countless families and businesses.

Tombigbee Electric Cooperative has demonstrated that when vision, leadership, and commitment to community are combined, meaningful progress can be made.

This accomplishment serves as a reminder that rural America must never be left behind. I commend Tombigbee Electric Cooperative for its steadfast dedication and leadership, and I look forward to seeing the continued benefits this investment will bring to the people of Northwest Alabama.

HONORING LA SHELLE DOZIER

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the career and legacy of La Shelle Dozier as she retires from her position as executive director of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), where she has served my constituents for over twenty-three years. I ask all of my colleagues to join me to acknowledge her distinguished career.

Since first joining SHRA in 2002, La Shelle has been integral to the agency's operations and has had a transformative effect on affordable housing opportunities in Sacramento. Starting as a management analyst, La Shelle quickly learned every facet of the Sacramento housing industry. She rose very quickly to managing the transformation of South Sacramento's Franklin Villa into the 360-unit Phoenix Park. She also directed resident services and oversaw the Housing Choice Voucher program that today supports more than 13,000 of my constituents with up to 100 percent of their rent needs.

La Shelle formally took leadership of SHRA in 2008, where she successfully pushed the agency to transform legacy projects into model affordable housing developments that continue to inspire communities across the country to

do more to address the housing crisis. In 2012, I worked with La Shelle and SHRA to secure a \$300,000 planning grant to begin the process of redeveloping the Twin Rivers public housing project, now called Marisol Village, an affordable housing project. Thirteen years of partnership later, and after securing over \$32 million in federal funding, Marisol Village is now double its original size at 427 units. Most importantly the community now provides my constituents with vital resources, like a full suite of resident services, green space, childcare facilities, a light rail station and cultural amenities, right at their doorstep. I am proud to have worked with La Shelle to create real positive impact with Sacramento's federal tax dollars right here in our community.

La Shelle Dozier's tenure at SHRA is a shining example of what makes Sacramento special. La Shelle knows firsthand that often it takes a village to build a village. Time and time again I have joined La Shelle in support of SHRA's projects and witnessed her build a wide coalition of local, state and federal partners to bring a safe and healthy home to those who need it most. The work that La Shelle and her team have done is truly indicative of why I love our region. Here in Sacramento, we lift up our community and seek to create positive and lasting impacts for all Sacramentans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the career and legacy of the SHRA Executive Director, La Shelle Dozier.

**HONORING JEFFREY BOOHER AS A
DISTINGUISHED FIRST RE-
SPONDER LEADER IN CENTRAL
FLORIDA**

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Jeffrey Booher is a certified firefighter/lieutenant and paramedic with the City of Kissimmee Fire Department, where he has served with distinction for over 20 years. A native of Central Florida, Jeffrey was inspired to enter the fire service following the events of September 11, 2001. Leaving behind a successful career in construction management, he committed himself to public service and began training at the Central Florida Fire Academy.

Throughout his tenure, Jeffrey has held numerous roles, including firefighter/EMT, firefighter/paramedic, and driver/operator. He currently serves as a company officer, leading his crew with a strong focus on safety, professionalism, and mentorship.

Jeffrey holds a bachelor's degree in fire administration from Waldorf University, graduating with honors. He has also completed specialized training at the Emergency Services Leadership Institute and the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, with a focus on incident command.

Jeffrey's technical credentials include technician-level certifications in Rope Rescue, Vehicle Machinery Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, and Trench Rescue.

His dedication has earned him multiple honors, including 2017 KFD Officer of the Year, Citywide Employee of the Month in 2015 and 2024, and City of Kissimmee Employee of the

Year in 2024. In 2019, he was awarded the Honeywell DuPont Scholarship to attend FDIC International.

Beyond his operational duties, Jeffrey has contributed significantly to department initiatives, serving on committees for firefighter safety, apparatus and station design, and the hiring and training of new firefighters. He also serves as a trustee and co-chairman of the Firefighter Pension Board. His role as assistant accreditation manager helped lead to the fire department's first international accreditation. With unwavering dedication, technical expertise, and a heart for service, Lieutenant Jeffrey Booher continues to embody the values of leadership, integrity, and commitment that define the fire service.

**RECOGNIZING THE FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF MERRIFIELD ON
THEIR 155TH ANNIVERSARY**

HON. JAMES R. WALKINSHAW

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the First Baptist Church of Merrifield on the occasion of the 155th anniversary of its sanctuary. For more than a century and a half, First Baptist Church of Merrifield has served as a cornerstone of faith, service, and community for the Northern Virginia region. First Baptist Church of Merrifield was started in a log cabin between 1871 to 1872. FBCM had then branched out and began worshipping on property owned by Mr. Robert Bradley of Merrifield. In 1891, the property was purchased from him by church Trustees: John E. Coates, Joshua Ball, and Joshua Pearson for the sum of five dollars. FBCM is a church formed from strong community family ties and has remained steadfastly community focused since.

FBCM remains a vital part of our district today by partnering with neighbors and local organizations to fulfill local needs through service projects, food and supply drives, youth programs, and many other community-centered initiatives. Through these efforts, FBCM continues to foster a spirit of faith, service, collaboration, and compassion throughout our district.

Over the past 155 years, FBCM has been led by 13 pastors and 2 interim pastors. Each one contributing to the growth of FBCM and leaving behind their own unique legacy of service. A few of those contributions include: the establishment of the Golden Ages Senior Saints Ministry, the construction of the Merrifield Child Development Center, the recovery of the original church bell, the creation of a youth mentoring program with Luther Jackson Middle School, the development of a tutoring outreach program targeting local students, and much more. FBCM and its congregation lead by faith and example in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending First Baptist Church of Merrifield for its efforts to better the Northern Virginia region. Achieving 155 years of ministry is a milestone worth celebrating. It is a privilege to work alongside this great congregation in the community, and I wish them continued success through faith, family, and service.

**RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH IN LAMPASAS, TEXAS**

HON. AUGUST PFLUGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 150th anniversary of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Lampasas, Texas.

Founded in 1873 during the turbulent years of Reconstruction, St. Mary's has stood as a steadfast place of worship and community for a century and a half. From its beginnings under the leadership of Dr. Thomas S. Denny and a small group of faithful families, the church persevered through frontier hardships, local feuds, floods, and economic trials. Over the years, it has grown into a vibrant congregation rooted in service, tradition, and faith.

The sanctuary itself, built of native limestone in the Victorian Gothic style, is a testament to the perseverance of its early leaders, including Capt. A.H. Barnes, Dr. James Bierbower, W.T. Campbell, T.H. Haynie, W.C. Price, and others whose dedication made possible the construction of a permanent church home. Generations of families, like the Campbells, the Haynies, the Richeys, the Olivers, and many more have sustained and enriched the life of St. Mary's across decades, ensuring its continued presence as a spiritual cornerstone of the Lampasas community.

Today, St. Mary's remains a thriving parish, carrying forward its mission with more than a dozen families whose membership stretches back multiple generations, while also welcoming new parishioners who bring fresh perspectives and energy. Together, this congregation embodies the resilience, stability, and continuity that have defined St. Mary's since its founding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring St. Mary's Episcopal Church for 150 years of faithful service to its members, the people of Lampasas, and the greater Central Texas region. May the congregation continue to serve as a beacon of hope, light, and grace for generations to come.

**HONORING LIEUTENANT
HUMBERTO VERGARA AS A DIS-
TINGUISHED FIRST RESPONDER
LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA**

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 6, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, as a dedicated Osceola County Fire Rescue Lieutenant with 32 years of service, Lieutenant Humberto Vergara has built a career centered on ensuring the well-being, preparedness, and safety of firefighters and the communities they serve. With a passion for leadership, health, and physical fitness, Lieutenant Vergara leads by example, fostering a culture of resilience and excellence within not only Osceola County Fire Rescue, but across the entire state of Florida.

Specializing in health and safety initiatives, Lieutenant Vergara is the health and safety