

nonexistent before 1925. The Opry hosted honky-tonk, bluegrass, gospel, rockabilly, and many other performers. This paved the way for what we know today as country music.

From music legends to up-and-comers, musicians from around the world rightfully revere the Grand Ole Opry as a place of prestige, history, and continued relevance.

There are fewer than 100 members of the Grand Ole Opry. It is indeed an elite crowd of men and women who made the world better, who embody country music, and who are part of our shared heritage as Americans. In fact, that membership sits at the top of dozens of obituaries among some of our Nation's finest performers.

This year, Tripadvisor ranked Nashville sixth among the best American travel destinations. More than 17 million people visited last year. That is in large part because of the influence of the Grand Ole Opry over the last 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, any seat in the house will do at the Grand Ole Opry to bear witness to the iconic barn background behind the stage. The lights that look like stars above you and the acoustics around you make for an unforgettable evening. No matter how many chances I get to see a show in person, I always sense the history, the importance, and the joy that the Grand Ole Opry represents.

As the United States Representative of Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District, I rise today to enthusiastically congratulate the Grand Ole Opry on a century of entertainment and a century of significance. I am confident that the man or woman who is in my shoes 100 years from now will feel compelled to do the same.

CONGRATULATING THE UPPERMAN BEES

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Upperman High School boys' basketball team on securing the first State championship in program history last month. The historic matchup was a nail-biter as the game was tied up for much of the night. Nonetheless, it ended with the Upperman Bees defeating the Tullahoma Wildcats 65-55.

This TSSAA Division 1 Class 3A BlueCross basketball championship win at Middle Tennessee State University puts their team at 32-3 on the season.

Again, I congratulate the players and their families. I also want to congratulate the coaches, including Head Coach Bobby McWilliams on the many hours they also put into this great win. Coach McWilliams says that focus was the key to their win. He says that his guys were locked in before they arrived at MTSU and it showed. Congratulations to the 2025 Tennessee State champion Upperman High School Bees.

CHALLENGES FACING OUR STUDENTS

(Ms. BONAMICI of Oregon was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, as someone who has dedicated years of my career to education striving to create a better future for children, I find it disturbing and ironic that my colleagues in the majority pass bills that they say are to protect students but, in fact, do nothing to address the real challenges children are facing in schools today.

The majority is willing to pass a bill to protect students from the Chinese Communist Party, something no parent or educator has ever mentioned to me, but not willing to address gun violence, increasing behavioral health needs, or, importantly, the stress and fear that the Trump administration has created by giving ICE free range to raid sensitive locations, including schools.

Don't take my word for it. Listen to the words of a fourth grade student in Oregon who wrote me this letter:

"Hi. I am a local student, and I am in fourth grade. Ever since the rules were changed to allow ICE agents to enter schools, I have felt scared for my safety and the safety of my classmates, friends, and neighbors. I feel scared and distracted in class sometimes because I am worried ICE might come in our school. I worry what might happen to me if I refuse to answer their questions to protect my friends and classmates. I also worry about ICE agents trying to talk to me on the bus ride from school. I worry about what I should do if ICE agents come up to my neighbors when I am walking with them home from the bus stop. Some of the things I worry about are: Do I hide my friends if they are getting taken? If ICE enters my school and takes someone, what will the school do? If ICE takes my classmate, what should I do? Where does ICE take people? And what do I do if my friends come home to an empty house because their family got deported?"

"I wish I did not have to worry about these things, and I wish even more that my friends, classmates, and neighbors did not have to either. Thanks for your time."

Mr. Speaker, this administration said they were going to go after dangerous criminals and drug dealers, but what they are doing instead with this disastrous mass deportation effort is creating fear and stress across the country including among young children.

"I wish I didn't have to worry about these things," the student said. So do I and so should anybody in this body with an ounce of compassion. These are kids. Let that sink in, and let's do what we need to do to truly protect students.

CONGRATULATING GLENVAR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' SWIM TEAM

(Mr. CLINE of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary achievement of the 2025 Glenvar High School boys' swim team, the VHSL Class 1 and 2 combined State champions. The Glenvar Highlanders traveled to Richmond on February 27 and captured their second consecutive State title, an incredible accomplishment that reflects their hard work, talent, and dedication.

With a squad of just 11 boys, Glenvar scored an impressive 280 points, outpacing second-place Radford High by 75 points. Of the 11 swimming events contested, the Highlanders won 5 and were runners-up in 2 others.

Congratulations to team members: seniors Avery McClanahan, Alec McIlwain, Kees VanGerven, Connor Wilkes, and Zach Adams; juniors Landon Cairns, Darren Delby, Grayson Shearer, and Avery Thompson; sophomore Cooper Ermel; and freshman Aspen Thompson.

Special recognition goes to individual champions Connor Wilkes, Landon Cairns, and Aspen Thompson, as well as the championship relay teams. Connor Wilkes closes his Glenvar career as one of the most decorated swimmers in school history and will continue his athletic and academic journey at Carson-Newman University.

The Glenvar Highlanders have made their school and community proud. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these outstanding young athletes.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUSTICE LAWRENCE LARKINS KOONTZ, JR.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of Justice Lawrence Larkins Koontz, Jr., of Salem, Virginia, who passed away at the age of 85.

Justice Koontz was one of the most consequential judges in the Commonwealth's history. Over a judicial career spanning 42 years, he served at every level of Virginia's court system, culminating in his roles as the founding chief judge of the Virginia Court of Appeals and as a justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

A Roanoke native and graduate of Virginia Tech and the University of Richmond School of Law—go Spiders—Justice Koontz was known for his clarity of writing, profound sense of fairness, and deep commitment to justice. Justice Koontz mentored generations of legal professionals and leaves a legacy of wisdom, service, and an unwavering dedication to the rule of law.

We extend our deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Elizabeth, his children, grandchildren, and all who were touched by his wisdom and kindness. May his memory be a blessing, and may we all strive to live with the same dedication to service that Justice Koontz so fully embodied.

RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I joined Senator MIKE LEE of Utah in introducing the No Union Time on the

Taxpayer's Dime Act, a critical step toward restoring accountability in the Federal workforce. This bill will end the abuse of official time which allows Federal employees to engage in union activities while being paid by the taxpayers.

For years, Federal employees have spent millions of taxpayer dollars on union-related work instead of performing their official responsibilities. Federal employees spent 3.6 million hours performing union-related activities in 2016 alone, costing taxpayers \$177.2 million.

Even after reforms under the Trump administration brought that number down to 2.6 million hours and \$135 million in 2019, the lack of unified reporting means the full scope of the problem remains unknown today. This is money that should have gone to serve the American people, not to subsidize private union interests.

Ending "official time" is a common-sense step to ensure taxpayer dollars are used responsibly and to increase accountability across the Federal workforce. Public funds should serve the American people, not private union interests.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

HONORING EDGAR CARL WILKE ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. KENNEDY of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American hero, World War II veteran Edgar Carl Wilke, as he celebrates his 100th birthday. A native Buffalonian and longtime resident of West Seneca, New York, Mr. Wilke served our Nation with courage and distinction during World War II.

Enlisting from his hometown, he joined the 24th Infantry Division of the 24th Regiment, achieving the rank of Private First Class. During his service in the Pacific theater, Mr. Wilke displayed extraordinary bravery, earning the Bronze Star Medal for his heroic actions.

While fighting in the Philippines, he was gravely wounded by an enemy grenade so severely that those awarding him the Purple Heart believed he would not survive. After enduring months in the hospital, he returned home where Mr. Wilke built a life of love and dedication alongside his beloved wife, Joan, until her passing in 2014.

Through it all, Mr. Wilke has remained a man of deep faith, trusting in God and embracing the simple joys of life.

In addition to the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, Mr. Wilke has been honored with numerous commendations, including the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars, the World War II Victory Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Marksman Badge with Rifle Bar.

As Mr. Wilke celebrates this incredible milestone surrounded by five generations of family, we are reminded that the freedoms we cherish were secured by the courage and sacrifice of patriots like him.

His life is a testament to resilience, service, and an unwavering love for the country and community he calls home.

Western New York and the United States of America are better because of him, and it is an honor to celebrate his incredible story.

On behalf of the people of western New York and a grateful nation, we wish Mr. Wilke a very happy 100th birthday and many more years to come. I thank Mr. Wilke for his service, and may his century of life continue to be an inspiration to us all.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I have the distinct honor of congratulating the University at Buffalo women's basketball team on their incredible victory in the women's NIT championship this past weekend.

On April 5, before a packed and energized Alumni Arena, the UB Bulls women's basketball team triumphed over Troy 88-84 accomplishing something few teams get to do: end their season with a championship win.

This moment marked the deepest postseason run in the history of UB basketball, men's or women's. However, this is more than just a win; this is a legacy in the making.

UB guard Lani Cornfield, a proud member of the Seneca Nation Indians and alum of Lake Shore High School, said it best: This just put Buffalo back on the map.

I extend a heartfelt congratulations to each of the players on this remarkable team:

Mallory Daly, Noelani Cornfield, Sitota Gines, Kirsten Lewis-Williams, Paula Lopez, Makenna Shaffer, Ariana Seawell, Caylen Spano, Terah Harness, Jordyn Beaty, and Chellia Watson.

I also recognize the coaching staff that has helped shape this program into a powerhouse and who continue the proud tradition of UB women's basketball: Head Coach Becky Burke, Associate Head Coach Jacey Brooks, Assistant Coach James Ewing, Assistant Coach Erin Sinnott, Director of Basketball Operations Allese Williams, and Vice President and Director of Athletics Mark Alnutt.

As UB guard Chellia Watson, who scored 23 points in the final game, put it: The key to victory was defense and grit, just not giving up, and showing we have got all the fight in the world.

Now, that is the Buffalo way.

This team's journey reminds us all what is possible when talent, opportunity, and unwavering determination come together. These young women are not just champions; they are role models inspiring the next generation of female athletes and showing young people in our community what can be achieved through dedication, resilience, and teamwork.

On behalf of western New York and our great Nation, I offer our heartfelt congratulations. We are proud, we are inspired, and we can't wait to see this incredible team in action next year defending their title.

Go Bulls.

□ 1030

HONORING WILLIAM MAY

(Mr. PATRONIS of Florida was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. PATRONIS. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I rise with a heavy heart over the loss of one of Florida's finest.

On Wednesday, April 2, Walton County Sheriff's Deputy William May responded to a local disturbance where he was fired upon by an armed suspect. As Deputy May returned fire, he was wounded by the assailant and subsequently died.

Due to his bravery, Deputy May was able to end the potential threat to the community before succumbing to his injuries.

Deputy May served the Walton County Sheriff's Office for more than a decade, beginning his career as a communications officer in 2014 before taking the oath of office in 2019 as a deputy sheriff. During his time in law enforcement, Deputy May earned lifesaving awards and multiple letters of commendation.

Today, the Walton County Sheriff's Office mourns the loss of a fellow deputy. The State of Florida mourns the loss of this hero. A wife mourns the loss of her husband, and four beautiful children mourn the loss of their father.

Unfortunately, Deputy May's story is one of many first responders around our country sacrificing their personal lives working 24/7/365, missing birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions in order to keep our American neighborhoods safe.

It is an honor to represent parts of Walton County and share that responsibility with Congressman NEAL DUNN, who joins me in this prayer for the members of our local law enforcement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to honor Walton County Deputy William May for the ultimate sacrifice he made for our communities.

RECOGNIZING JESSIE ECHAURY

(Mr. CORREA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jessie Echaury for his military service and contributions to our community.

In 2016, Jessie served our Nation as a U.S. Army soldier in Afghanistan. A decade later, he now serves other veterans as president of Cal State Fullerton's Student Veterans of America chapter.

In this role, he advocates for veteran students struggling with invisible wounds like PTSD.