

Mexico who have been working nonstop to put out these fires. I met with community leaders, including the brave men and women of Fire Station 87 in Granada Hills. Due to their bravery, courage, and action in responding to the Hurst fire, they were able to minimize danger and keep our neighbors safe. Our community thanks them.

I also visited one of the evacuation centers at the Ritchie Valens Recreation Center to learn more about how staff and volunteers have been working around the clock to help those who were forced to evacuate.

I visited the burn sites of the Hurst and Eaton fires, where I was able to assess the damage firsthand and tried to get a better understanding of what Federal resources would be needed to help communities rebuild.

Throughout the week, I was in contact with the Federal Government, including the White House and FEMA, where I was able to advocate for the Federal support necessary to keep constituents safe during the emergency.

My congressional colleagues and I are focused on making sure our constituents and our communities have what they need to get through and recover from this emergency without any conditions.

This isn't about party or politics, and I am proud to have joined both of our Senators and 46 other bipartisan Members of California's congressional delegation in urging President Biden to sign a major disaster declaration so that the Federal Government can provide public assistance, individual assistance, and direct Federal assistance to our communities.

We are grateful that President Biden quickly signed the declaration, and my hope is that President-elect Trump will continue to provide resources so our constituents can immediately access the funds and resources that they need to rebuild their lives.

These fires are the costliest in California's history, and they are impacting everyone, regardless of income or party. Lives and livelihoods have been lost, and many more continue to be in danger. We want our constituents to know that disaster assistance is available and will be available to them. This assistance may include rental payments for temporary housing for those who lost their homes, grants for home repairs, unemployment payments for workers who have lost their job because of the fires, and crisis counseling for those who have been traumatized by this disaster.

Additionally, FEMA disaster assistance may be able to help those who have lost a home regardless if they were uninsured, had insurance, or underinsured. Visit [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov) to get started.

My office is also ready to help those who have been impacted by the fires. If my constituents need assistance, I encourage them to reach out to my office, and we will be able to start advocating on their behalf to get the Federal resources that they need.

The San Fernando Valley is home, and I am honored to represent my home in Congress. That is why I am committed to working with our local, State, and Federal officials to make sure our community has the resources that it needs to rebuild stronger. Our community is strong and resilient, and we will help each other come back from this disaster.

#### CONGRATULATING A. MICHAEL HICKOX ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contributions of A. Michael Hickox and his retirement as the property appraiser for Nassau County, Florida.

For 12 years, Mike has been an amazing public servant, committed to fairness and customer service. Let's be honest, Madam Speaker, being a property appraiser is probably one of the toughest jobs around, but Mike has done it well, skillfully, and leaves the office in a much better place.

While he was leading, Mike also served as the president of the Florida Association of Property Appraisers and then served on the boards of the Nassau Education Foundation and the Nassau County Economic Development Board.

To put it simply, Madam Speaker, Mike has spent his career serving others. Mike may not be our property appraiser anymore, but I know he is not done. I can't wait to see what he does next.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in congratulating Mike on a job well done. Go get 'em, Mike.

#### HONORING ROMULUS COUNCILWOMAN VIRGINIA WILLIAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I honor the incredible life and legacy of Romulus Councilwoman Virginia Williams, who unexpectedly passed away. She has left a void in our community and in our hearts.

Councilwoman Williams was a relentless advocate for our families, ensuring that no one in our community lacked basic necessities. Her work with organizations like Forgotten Harvest and her creating her own organization because of her passion for organizing food drives, holiday giveaways, and joyful community events embodied her unwavering love for the city of Romulus and our families.

She was committed to always lifting up her neighbors, often going above and beyond to bring hope and resources to those in need. Her dedication reminds us all that even the smallest acts of kindness can build stronger, more connected communities.

Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she has touched. We are forever grateful for her service. I thank her family for sharing her with all of us and allowing us to honor her. My deepest condolences go out to them and all her loved ones during this difficult time.

Rest in peace, Councilwoman Williams.

HONORING DEARBORN MAYOR JACK O'REILLY, JR.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I honor the life of former Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly, Jr. Our community lost an extraordinary leader whose dedication to public service shaped the city of Dearborn and our communities in Michigan forever.

Mayor O'Reilly served as the president of Dearborn City Council for nearly two decades and served a 15-year tenure as Dearborn's sixth mayor.

I still remember my first meeting with him when he was a council president during the time I was a young law student. Mayor O'Reilly was so patient in teaching me about how some community programs were successful while others struggled. He was a champion for workforce development. His patience and his depth of knowledge and willingness to teach me and so many others left a lasting impression, I know, on me.

I would have never thought that I would have the honor to be able to represent him here in the United States Congress. Mayor O'Reilly's kindness and thoughtful approach to leadership embodied what it truly means to be a public servant.

I thank Mayor O'Reilly, Jr.'s family for sharing him with all of us. I know it wasn't easy. My thoughts are with his family, his loved ones, and all who were fortunate enough to know him.

His legacy will continue to inspire future generations not only in Dearborn but throughout southeastern Michigan and beyond.

CONGRATULATING ABDUL "AL" HAIDOUS ON HIS RETIREMENT

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I recognize Wayne County Commissioner Abdul "Al" Haidous for his more than 40 years of public service to the city of Wayne and Wayne County and congratulate him on his retirement.

We lovingly call him Al. He was born in Lebanon and came to the city of Wayne five decades ago. He made a name for himself in the community, running Al's Friendly Market with the help of his wife, Mary, who I love dearly, for 35 years.

As the first Arab-American mayor in Wayne County, his leadership paved the way for future leaders and was an inspiration to so many of us. In 2014, he was elected to the Wayne County Commission. For 14 years, he served our residents with dedication and resilience, always focusing on bringing people together.

I thank Commissioner Haidous for his decades of public service. His legacy will continue to inspire our community in years to come. Please join

me in recognizing Commissioner Al Haidous as we wish him well in his retirement.

#### THANKING NICK BOSTIC FOR HIS COURAGEOUS ACTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Alabama). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Nick Bostic, a former pizza delivery man who saved five sisters from a burning house.

Just after midnight, July 11, 2022, Bostic was driving nearby when he saw the house in flames. Bostic entered the home, where he found an 18-year-old woman, a toddler, and two 13-year-olds outside the upstairs bedroom. He led them out of the house before running back inside to rescue the 6-year-old girl.

For his actions, Nick Bostic received the Carnegie Medal, given to American and Canadian citizens who put themselves in extreme danger while saving and attempting to save the lives of others. It is North America's highest honor for civilian heroism.

The entire Lafayette community is grateful for his courageous actions to save the lives of these young girls.

#### CONGRATULATING BROWNSBURG BULLDOGS ON THEIR IHSA 6A VICTORY

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Brownsburg High School football team for winning the IHSA 6A State championship this year.

The Brownsburg Bulldogs took on Westfield High School in the State finals in Lucas Oil Stadium and emerged victorious, with a final score of 22-17. This was Brownsburg's first State title in nearly 40 years, and I know this win has meant so much to the Brownsburg community cheering them on to victory.

I congratulate these outstanding student athletes on becoming State champions. They should be incredibly proud of their hard work and dedication that brought them this victory. I also congratulate the parents, coaches, and faculty who gave their time and talent to this team. They couldn't have done it without them.

Congratulations again to the Brownsburg Bulldogs.

#### HONORING DR. MARK RUSSELL ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Dr. Mark Russell, who recently retired from his position as a professor of agricultural sciences education and communication at Purdue University. Dr. Russell joined Purdue in 1982. From August of 2015 to September of 2022, Dr. Russell served as the head of the agricultural sciences department.

Dr. Russell has truly been a leader in the Purdue community. Thanks to his expertise, he has judged over 1,100 horse shows for national breed associations in 14 countries. Dr. Russell has also established and expanded multiple

exchange programs around the world, growing the university's global presence and relationships.

He has been a stalwart professor at Purdue University's ag department, and his loss will be felt by the Purdue community and beyond. We wish him the very best as he begins this next chapter in his well-earned retirement.

#### HONORING CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER DANIEL PETERSON'S LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of retired Chief Warrant Officer Daniel Peterson, a champion for southern Nevada's veteran community.

Chief Peterson was a highly decorated Army veteran and unrelenting advocate for those around him. After flying helicopters in the Army for more than 20 years, he came home to serve as the commander of the Henderson chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, to be a member of the Henderson Vietnam Veterans of America, and attend as many unaccompanied veteran burial ceremonies as he could find. He also went to every Veterans Treatment Court graduation and never hesitated to offer his support to fellow veterans in need.

To be clear, it is impossible to sum up Chief Peterson's decades of service in just one speech on the House floor. That is part of the reason why I had the privilege of working with the Library of Congress for his story to be part of the Veterans History Project.

While he has too many medals to name here, I can say this: Chief Peterson was a mentor, a father, a spouse, a leader, a friend, a protector, and a servant to both southern Nevada and our entire country.

I extend my condolences and prayers to Dan's wife, Eileen, and his four children and stepchildren. We all owe Dan a debt of gratitude. We will all miss him.

□ 1030

#### UNCONDITIONAL AID FOR EATON FIRE VICTIMS

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, this week, I returned from my district in southern California, which has been completely devastated by the Eaton fire.

In Altadena and northern Pasadena, the fire took our neighbors' lives and destroyed the structures that provided stability to countless families' hopes, dreams, and memories. The fire has destroyed over 7,000 structures; left 20,000 people homeless; forced numerous health centers to close; and burned schools, businesses, and community institutions to the ground.

This is just one of six serious fires across Los Angeles, including the more than 23,000-acre Palisades fire. Places that served as safe havens for generations of Angelenos and where community was built across the San Gabriel Valley are now unrecognizable.

The Altadena Community Church, Altadena mosque, Pasadena Jewish Temple, Armenian school, mom-and-pop business centers, Eliot Arts Magnet School, and Altadena Country Club were all burned to the ground.

When Black Americans fled racial segregation in the Jim Crow South and came to Los Angeles, many made Altadena their home because there was no redlining there preventing them from owning homes. It has remained a hub of Black culture and civic life in Los Angeles. After being forced into incarceration in camps during World War II, many Japanese Americans came to Pasadena and built their lives back up.

Last week, thousands had to flee their homes at a moment's notice, frantically searching for pets and crying out to loved ones, many with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Thousands of people have lost their homes and a lifetime's worth of belongings and memories.

Tragically, first responders have found 16 people who lost their lives, and they expect that number to rise.

Anthony Mitchell, Sr., a dedicated father, died alongside his son while waiting for help. Just a week before the fires began, Anthony told his son that what he treasured most in life was not money or possessions but his family.

Victor Shaw died outside of his longtime family home with a garden hose in his hand. He did everything he could to save it.

Erlene Louise Kelly bought her home in Altadena with her late husband, Howard, in the late 1960s. Together, they raised two kids, watched their grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow, and celebrated holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries.

The Los Angeles wildfires are on track to become one of the most costly and devastating natural disasters in our country's history. Yet, scores of Republicans, led by President-elect Trump and Speaker JOHNSON, are threatening to place conditions on the State of California for disaster assistance to flow to these victims.

This is truly unprecedented. Never in our history has the Federal Government placed conditions on emergency disaster aid to our own citizens. I invite any Republican in Congress who is entertaining these demands to visit my district, see the devastation for yourself, and look the victims in the eye when you tell them they don't deserve help from their country because you disagree with certain policies passed by their State.

This is the United States of America. We help our citizens when they fall victim to a natural disaster, regardless of their political party or opinions. We do it without strings attached, like we did just in December, 4 weeks ago, for victims of Hurricanes Milton and Helene.

I look forward to working with the majority to secure critical disaster relief funding that is necessary for this vibrant, beautiful, unique region to recover and rebuild.