

Captain Wilson will be remembered by colleagues for his depth of knowledge and experience, for his toughness, and also for his heart of gold. He expected a lot from his crew, but he also created a fun atmosphere to work in.

Captain Wilson's legacy of service, humility, and devotion will continue to resonate in Loudoun County and beyond.

May we keep his family in our prayers and honor his memory by carrying forward the values he lived by.

□ 1830

HONORING MICHAEL FRIEDMAN

(Ms. TLAIB asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the time to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of my dear friend and neighbor, Michael Friedman, a tireless champion of social and economic justice and workplace democracy.

From his early days as a truck driver and founding member of Teamsters for a Democratic Union to his distinguished legal career, Mike's life was rooted in advancing the rights and dignity of working people.

Mike believed deeply in the power of unions and cooperatives to transform lives for the better.

As general counsel at the Center for Community-Based Enterprise, Mike dedicated himself to helping businesses transition to worker ownership, empowering employees, and strengthening communities.

Mike was an active social justice organizer in Detroit for decades. He co-founded our local Jewish Voice for Peace chapter and helped lead their work challenging the U.S. support for the Israeli Government's apartheid and genocide in Gaza.

His legacy will continue to inspire all of us who fight for justice, equity, and workers' rights. Our thoughts are with his wife, Barbara Harvey, and their family during this very difficult time.

GUN VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

(Mr. DESAULNIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask when the majority will join us to address the epidemic of gun violence in our schools in America.

A recent shooting at Annunciation Catholic School in Minneapolis left 2 children dead and 21 injured when a shooter opened fire during morning mass.

Since 2013, there have been more than 1,500 incidents of gunfire on America's school grounds, resulting in 485 deaths and 1,100 injuries nationally.

As a result of California's strong gun regulations, residents of that State, my home State, are 25 percent less

likely to be killed in a mass shooting than people in other States. California's overall rate of gun deaths is 42 percent lower than the national average. However, 40 percent of the guns used in California come from outside of the State. We need to deal with this nationally even while States show action.

The national statistics are much more troubling. For example, the U.S. gun homicide rate is 26 times that of other high-income countries. House Republicans continue to block all legislation to address this crisis.

It is past time that we put the safety of our children before the profits of the gun lobby and finally pass laws to protect our communities and young Americans from gun violence particularly in school.

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

(Mr. PATRONIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PATRONIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Greek Orthodox community in Florida and also across the United States to extend a heartfelt welcome to his All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who will visit Washington, D.C., from September 15 through September 17.

For many Greek Orthodox faithful in my district, His All-Holiness is more than a religious leader. He is their spiritual father. He is a voice of compassion, a symbol of faith that has been carried across generations of families who came to America in search of freedom of opportunity. His visit to our Nation's Capital is an occasion for pride for my constituents and all Orthodox Christians who call America home.

Patriarch Bartholomew is known worldwide as a bridge-builder, working tirelessly to promote peace, dialogue, and respect among all different faiths. He is also a champion for protecting our natural environment, earning him the title of the "Green Patriarch."

His leadership is a source of inspiration not only for the Greek Orthodox community but all those who care about human rights, religious liberty, and the stewardship of God's creation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming His All-Holiness to the United States and celebrating this historic visit with many Greek Orthodox Americans who are honored by his presence. This moment is a reminder of enduring contributions that faith, family, and the community make the strength of our Nation a great nation.

HONORING SOPHIA L. REID

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. TORRES of New York was recognized for 60 min-

utes as the designee of the minority leader.)

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary leader in my district and a true champion for older adults in the Bronx, Ms. Sophia L. Reid.

For nearly two decades, Ms. Reid has dedicated herself to the health, dignity, and well-being of our senior community. As program director of the Eastchester Neighborhood Older Adult Center under R.A.I.N., Sophia is more than an administrator. She is a mentor, a caregiver, and a tireless advocate for our community's older adults.

Sophia brings compassion and leadership to everything she does by fostering a sense of community, by organizing health education programs, and hosting wellness activities. As one of her residents retells: "Sophia has provided an environment where her older adults feel safe, comfortable, and happy to be in daily."

The older adults that come are from various ethnic backgrounds and not all speak English, but Sophia says: You don't have to love each other, but you must respect each other, and that is how it is.

Her years of dedicated service and passionate care have led her to receive countless awards from the New York City Council, the Bronx Borough President's Office, and now a congressional recognition.

Her work in recognition speaks volumes to the impact that Sophia has had on the Bronx. Sophia has created a space where our seniors feel safe, valued, and seen.

In a city as diverse as New York, she reminds us that respect, community, and care are the foundations of aging with dignity.

On behalf of the people of the Bronx, I thank Sophia Reid for her unwavering service.

HONORING ALLISON GRIFFITH AND RADCLIFF
MAGENTA BLOCK ASSOCIATION

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I want to honor the extraordinary dedication of community leader Allison Griffith and the Radcliff Magenta Block Association, whose tireless work has transformed their Bronx neighborhood.

Over 20 years ago, Lillian McDuffie and Yvonne Long fought against a serious health hazard in which raw sewage was backing up into their homes every time it rained. Their persistence brought attention to a dangerous problem that endangered children playing in basements and resident safety.

After over a year of fighting for the issue to be addressed and for the continued cleaning of the sewer system, the request was approved, and the reconstruction on the area began to fix the sewer system as a whole.

Their commitment didn't stop there. Seeing neighborhood children with nothing to do, they helped start a block party to bring the community together, fostering connection and care among neighbors.

Today, Allison Griffith carries on this tradition as the chairperson of the Radcliff Magenta Block Association, keeping the community united and engaged year after year. I have had the pleasure of attending the block party since I began representing the community, and it has been a day full of fun and events for the full neighborhood.

I am proud to support this extraordinary community organization and its efforts to build a healthier, stronger Bronx. Their story reminds us that real change begins with neighbors looking out for one another.

RECOGNIZING CHERYL MCNEAR

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Cheryl McNear, the newly elected president of the 47th Precinct Community Council and a steadfast leader in our Bronx community.

Cheryl has dedicated nearly a decade of service to the council holding multiple leadership roles, including vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and assistant secretary before being elected president.

As a retired associate dean of student affairs, she brings a wealth of experience in leadership, policy, and institutional structure, skills she now applies to strengthen community safety and engagement.

Beyond her professional achievements, Cheryl serves as a community chaplain and is deeply engaged with organizations like the NAACP Williamsbridge branch and Not On My Watch Incorporated.

Her leadership is shaped by clarity, order, and emotional intelligence, anchored in a deep understanding that community work is not just a responsibility but a ministry.

For Cheryl, serving the community is not a job. It is a lifelong calling rooted in principle and purpose. Mr. Speaker, Cheryl McNear's life deserves to be honored for her outstanding leadership and dedication to making the Bronx a safer, stronger place for all.

□ 1840

HONORING MARGARET ALEXANDER

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Margaret Alexander, a dedicated and passionate community service advocate, and a voice for the voiceless who volunteers for various causes.

Margaret's projects include coordinating events for The Beacon of Hope, as a youth mentor with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and recently held a key role as an ambassador advocate for the Alzheimer's Association.

She cared for her mother and aunt, both of whom succumbed to Alzheimer's, for over 15 years. As an experienced caregiver, she turned her pain into power. Her work with the Alzheimer's Association has afforded her the opportunity to attend rallies and meet with elected officials.

Her successful advocacy and dedication to her work led her to be a lead

speaker before the 2024 Alzheimer's National Forum in Washington, D.C., where she was awarded an Alzheimer's National Advocacy Team award.

Margaret currently leads a business that provides social activities for folks living with mild and moderate dementia. Additionally, she has participated in Alzheimer's research trials for over 5 years to assist in the fight against this devastating disease.

Margaret's work has helped so many seniors in our community age with dignity. I thank her for her incredible service.

CELEBRATING ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate a true pillar of faith, resilience, and community in the Bronx, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Williamsbridge.

What began humbly in 1914 in the living room of Mr. and Mrs. William Witty has grown into one of the most vibrant and enduring congregations in our city. Through decades of transition, leadership, and vision, from the Rev. Harold McLean to Rev. Pierre-Andre Duvert, St. Luke's has been a beacon of hope, compassion, and purpose.

Whether building formal senior housing, launching youth ministries, or expanding its spiritual and physical sanctuary, St. Luke's has always understood that faith is more than words; it is action rooted in love and service.

For over a century, St. Luke's has lived its mission not only within its sanctuary but throughout our borough and the world. We thank its clergy, leaders, and parishioners, past and present. We honor their legacy, and we celebrate their unwavering commitment to lifting others up.

May St. Luke's continue to be a light in the Bronx for generations to come.

CELEBRATING THE 67TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAACP WILLIAMSBRIDGE BRANCH

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the NAACP Williamsbridge Branch on its 67th anniversary gala.

For nearly seven decades, this branch has been a steadfast champion for justice and equality in the Bronx, especially in the northeast Bronx, where its leadership has empowered families, defended civil rights, and strengthened neighborhoods through action.

From education to civic engagement, the Williamsbridge Branch has been a powerful force for change, amplifying the voices of our communities and ensuring that they are heard, valued, and respected.

This year's gala not only honors exceptional leaders in youth, health education, and public service, but it also reaffirms the branch's deep commitment to investing in the next generation.

On behalf of New York's 15th Congressional District, I commend the Williamsbridge NAACP for its enduring legacy of advocacy. May the 67th anniversary be both a celebration of progress and a call to continue the vital work that lies ahead.

HONORING REV. DR. ALPHER SYLVESTER

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I wish to honor an extraordinary leader, scholar, and servant of God, Rev. Dr. Alpher Sylvester, district superintendent of the Connecticut District in the New York Annual Conference.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, the seventh of ten children, Rev. Sylvester was shaped by a deep faith and disciplined upbringing. His journey from Sunday school in the Caribbean to lecturing at NYU and ministering across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East is a testament to his calling, his conviction, and his commitment to empowering God's people.

He is not only a passionate preacher and teacher of the Word, but a scholar, mentor, and global faith leader, sponsoring pilgrimages and uplifting lives through exegetical preaching and compassionate service.

Through every role—as a husband, father, academic, and pastor—Rev. Dr. Sylvester has embodied excellence and purpose.

On behalf of the people of New York's 15th Congressional District, I commend him for his enduring dedication to ministry and to humanity. May his life continue to be a blessing to the body of Christ and to the world.

HONORING URSULA CRUZ-GREENE

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ursula Cruz-Greene, a remarkable public servant, and a pillar of our Bronx community.

Born in Lumberton, North Carolina, Ursula moved to New York and quickly made her mark. After graduating as a valedictorian from Global Business Institute, she joined Bronx Community Board 12 in 1995 and has been serving with excellence ever since.

In 2000, she earned her bachelor's degree magna cum laude from Monroe College, further proving her dedication to growth and service.

For nearly three decades, Ursula has gone above and beyond by supporting residents, advocating for seniors, and ensuring that government works for the people it serves. Her compassion, professionalism, and commitment are felt in every corner of our district.

On behalf of the Bronx and this House, I thank Ursula Cruz-Greene for her extraordinary service and look forward to her continued leadership.

RECOGNIZING KEITH ELIJAH THOMPSON

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary spiritual leader and community pillar in the Bronx, the Rev. Dr. Rabbi Keith Elijah Thompson.

For over four decades, Rabbi Thompson has served the people of the Bronx with unwavering faith, humility, and purpose.

He is a man of God who is known across the community as a man who inspires, teaches, and instills hope in those around him. Dr. Thompson started out by leading a small, home-based Bible study for members of his community.

In 1980, he would go on to become the founder and chief apostle of the Bronx Miracle Gospel Tabernacle Word of Faith Ministry. He has uplifted countless lives through dynamic preaching, compassionate service, and inspired teaching.

Known as a teacher of teachers, Dr. Thompson has built a ministry rooted in love, empowerment, and transformation. His leadership extends far beyond the pulpit, establishing the Bronx Resource Community Center in 2008, mentoring clergy, and serving for two decades as a trusted liaison with the NYPD.

In a world too often defined by division, Dr. Thompson reminds us of the power of faith to unify. His legacy is not just in the honors he has received but in the lives he has changed.

HONORING REV. DR. PIERRE-ANDRE DUVERT

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Rev. Dr. Pierre-Andre Duvert, a spiritual giant, and a community leader whose life of service has touched thousands across the Bronx and beyond.

Born in Haiti and ordained in 1991 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Dr. Duvert has spent 34 years in ordained ministry, living out his calling with humility, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

As rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in the Bronx, one of the largest congregations in the diocese, he has not only shepherded his parish but also uplifted our broader community.

His dedication extends far beyond the pulpit, from instituting the Annual Police Appreciation Day, to serving on committees focused on reparations and shared mission, to mentoring the next generation of faith leaders.

With two doctorates and decades of academic and spiritual leadership, he exemplifies the intersection of faith, intellect, and service.

I thank Dr. Rev. Duvert for his lifelong ministry and for being a beacon of hope, healing, and unity in our community.

□ 1850

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF AUREO
IVAN CARDONA

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Aureo Ivan Cardona, a son of Puerto Rico, a child of the Bronx, and a giant in the fight for justice, dignity, and community.

Born in Arecibo and raised in Hunts Point, Aureo embodied the very best of our community, rooted in faith, driven by purpose, and committed to service.

Aureo often shared that he had a beautiful childhood. "I never knew we were poor because I was happy."

Aureo was a tireless advocate for justice, a fearless voice of the marginalized, and a champion of the underserved. His career began with the Model Cities Program, tackling urban poverty, housing decay, and racial inequality in New York City. He later became president of the South Bronx

Housing Corporation, tasked with rebuilding the community after the devastating fires of the 1970s.

Aureo never stopped believing in the power of people to transform their neighborhoods. He was a champion for youth, a builder of homes and hope, and the founder of the National Hispanic Housing Coalition. His legacy reaches from the Bronx to Miami, from Puerto Rico to Spain, and far beyond.

Aureo's voice echoed for the marginalized. His leadership lit the path for generations.

Aureo was more than an advocate. He was an artist, a mentor, a loving husband, a father, and a friend. His life was a master class in service, compassion, and joy.

To his beloved wife, Cookie; his daughter, Ralina; and his extended family, I say thank you for sharing him with us. The Bronx is better because your father and husband lived. May his memory be a blessing and a call to action.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND DR. RABBI KEITH
ELIJAH THOMPSON

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary spiritual leader and community pillar in the Bronx: the Reverend Dr. Rabbi Keith Elijah Thompson.

For over four decades, Reverend Dr. Rabbi Thompson has served the people of the Bronx with unwavering faith, humility, and purpose, a man of God who was known across the community as a leader who inspires, teaches, and instills hope in those around him.

Dr. Thompson started out by leading a small home-based Bible study for members of his community. In 1980, he would go on to become the founder and chief apostle of the Bronx Miracle Gospel Tabernacle Word of Faith Ministry. He has uplifted countless lives through dynamic preaching, compassionate service, and inspired teaching.

Known as a teacher of teachers, Dr. Thompson has built a ministry rooted in love, empowerment, and transformation. His leadership extends far beyond the pulpit, establishing the Bronx Resource Community Center in 2008, mentoring clergy, and serving for over two decades as a trusted liaison with the New York Police Department.

In a world too often defined by division, Dr. Thompson reminds us of the power of faith to unify. His legacy is not just in the honors he has received, but also in the lives he has changed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF CHARLIE KIRK

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. SCHWEIKERT of Arizona was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, instead of an hour of another economics presentation, we need to have a conversation.

Is the evil winning? A couple of hours ago, one of my constituents lost his life. There is a 16-month-old whose daddy is not coming home. There is a 3-year-old little girl whose daddy is not coming home. Erika, the wife, can you just imagine what is going on right now? Do we really now live in a country where words take your life?

Last weekend, it was either Monday or the weekend—and Andy will know the proper name. There is a newspaper called the Beehive or something like that—forgive me for not knowing the name—and it actually did a whole expose on Charlie Kirk coming to universities in Utah to actually spread his message.

If you actually read it, it was a classic conservative message of hope, of loving people, of believing marriage and prosperity were really good for Americans, and a message for young people.

The other half of the article was about how many people in Utah hated this message and what they would do to stop him because, as you know, having a conversation now is—particularly, if it is conversation that doesn't support collectivism, the left, and some weird dystopian view of what America is—your kids don't have a dad that comes home.

Look, I am not here to try to make this a drama. Maybe we hyperpersonalized it a little bit. I have a 3-year-old little boy at home, and I have a 9-year-old girl. My little girl is scared to death. When she is home with mom, she has to walk through the house every evening and make sure every window and door is locked because we had someone attack us a couple of weeks ago in a Costco parking lot.

This is America. Great job.

I have asked a couple of my friends who knew Charlie Kirk better than I do—actually, my brother knows him better than I do. The morality of a life that is taken at age 31 that was actually just trying to make us better—and that cost you your life? What is wrong?

Every Member of this body, particularly on our side, I beg of us, understand and embrace this message of love, conservatism, prosperity, hope, and the morality of family. We have to make sure this legacy of a young man who was actually having a remarkable impact on a society that is lost—let's keep that message alive because it is worth fighting for.

The idea of someone losing their life for words—I am going to sit down. Andy, bail me out here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS), my neighbor.

□ 1900

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, today we tragically lost a tremendous leader and a friend. We didn't lose him so much as he was taken from us.

Charlie Kirk was an inspiration to an entire generation, and I believe that his legacy will grow. He will be remembered as someone who changed the course of this Nation.