



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

No. 151

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GIMENEZ).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 16, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CARLOS A. GIMENEZ to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2025, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

CONGRATULATING DR. MICHAEL WELSH

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS of Iowa was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Michael Welsh, a University of Iowa professor of internal medicine, on winning the 2025 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award. The Lasker Award is one of the most prestigious biomedical and clinical research awards.

Dr. Welsh was recognized for his extraordinary research on cystic fibrosis,

which is helping to pave the way to new therapies that are dramatically improving health and extending life for people with cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic lung disease that primarily affects young people. Dr. Welsh's research has been instrumental in understanding the function of a critical CFTR protein and how it causes cystic fibrosis, which has led to the creation of lifesaving therapies. Aided by his medical team, Dr. Welsh created a triple drug combination that treats up to 90 percent of those affected by cystic fibrosis.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Dr. Welsh for all of his body of research and congratulations on the Lasker Award.

CONGRATULATING KIRK FERENTZ, THE BIG TEN'S WINNINGEST COACH

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Iowa football coach Kirk Ferentz for becoming the Big Ten's all-time winningest coach.

With the Iowa Hawkeyes 47-7 win over UMass Minutemen on September 13, Coach Kirk Ferentz broke Woody Hayes' record. Coach Ferentz' career started as the first season head coach at the University of Iowa in 1999 and since then he has won two Big Ten titles and conference Coach of the Year four times.

Coach Ferentz is in his 27th season as coach of the Hawkeyes, and he won his 206th game with the program to break the conference's all-time list milestone. He is the longest tenured active head coach in college football, with a 206-124 record at Iowa and a 217-145 career record. This achievement is a testament to Coach Ferentz' leadership and commitment to excellence within the Hawkeye organization.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Coach Ferentz. Go Hawks.

I would like to extend birthday wishes to my amazing husband and partner, Curt Meeks. Happy birthday, Curt.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY FLY-IN

(Ms. SEWELL of Alabama was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome to our Nation's Capitol patient advocates from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network for their annual fly-in.

This week, 700 advocates representing every State and all 435 congressional delegations and districts will be raising awareness of the urgent need for policies that improve cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, and patient support. It is truly an honor to have these advocates with us this week sharing their stories of resilience, loss, determination, and hope.

Like so many of these advocates, I know firsthand the impact cancer can have on our families. On June 10, 2021, I lost my beloved mother, Nancy Gardner Sewell, to pancreatic cancer. Like so many patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, my mother's cancer was not detected until it was stage IV, and therefore, was not treatable.

Tragically, the cancer took her life 8 short weeks after her diagnosis. It was a shock to our entire family, the lingering effects of which I feel every day.

In an effort to turn my pain into passion, I made a commitment to do all that I could to prevent other families from experiencing such a painful loss. That is why I am proud to be leading legislation alongside my Republican colleague, Congressman JODEY ARRINGTON from Texas, to expand access to early detection cancer screenings.

Our bill, the Nancy Gardner Sewell Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act, would create a pathway for Medicare to cover emerging blood tests, once FDA approved, which holds the promise of screening for up to 40 types of cancers with a single blood draw.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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When it comes to cancer, we know that early detection is our best protection, and that is exactly what this bill will do. It is about ensuring that those who are most at risk can catch cancer early and stop it before it spreads.

Thanks to the advocacy of the American Cancer Society and their partners, our bill has bipartisan support. Mr. Speaker, 295 House Members and 62 Senators have cosponsored it.

Last Congress, Jodey surprised me by renaming the legislation in honor of my late mother, Nancy Gardner Sewell, of Selma, Alabama, who passed away in 2021 from pancreatic cancer.

Who was she?

My mom was a devout Christian who lived a life of faith, an exemplary educator, and a library media specialist. She served in the Selma public school system for 36 years where she shaped minds and uplifted children. As a librarian, she was a strong advocate for reading, initiating the Reading is Fundamental, RIF, program in 1973, delivering books to children throughout Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. It is a program that still serves children in Selma and Dallas County and Alabama's rural Black Belt today.

Nancy Sewell was a trailblazing civic leader. She became the first African-American woman elected to Selma's city council and served as an inspirational role model for women in politics.

Her favorite saying was: Bloom where you are planted.

We can make a difference right where we are, and she made a big difference in the lives of so many people whom she touched.

Again, I want to thank the American Cancer Society and their more than 700 supporters for honoring my mother on this day of advocacy, her birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join us in this important effort. Let's pass H.R. 842, the Nancy Gardner Sewell Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act and pave the way for a world without cancer.

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HURRICANE MARÍA'S 8-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. HERNÁNDEZ of Puerto Rico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. For the benefit of my constituents and the communities affected, I will offer my remarks in Spanish.

Hoy me paro aquí con la voz prestada de un pueblo que no olvida. Hace ocho años, el 20 de septiembre, Puerto Rico amaneció desgarrado—no sólo en términos de su infraestructura pero en cuanto al alma de su gente. El huracán María no fue solo un fenómeno atmosférico, sino una odisea que dolorosamente reflejó la fortaleza del pueblo de Puerto Rico y de lo que ocurre cuando se combina el colapso de

la infraestructura con años de negligencia institucional.

Por eso, hoy me honra presentar una resolución para conmemorar este aniversario solemne, para reconocer a quienes se perdieron, a quienes resistieron, y a un pueblo que se levantó con dignidad frente al abandono.

Se cayeron los techos. Se apagó la luz. Pero quizás lo más doloroso fue el silencio. No sólo la falta de comunicación, sino la ausencia de respuesta efectiva, de coordinación, de urgencia. Ese vacío se sintió como el silencio dentro del ojo del huracán: una calma engañosa, que no promete alivio, sino que anuncia que lo peor aún está por llegar.

Recuerdo a los viejitos cargando cubos de agua por lomas empinadas. Madres haciendo fila por hielo para conservar la insulina. Vecinos compartiendo una planta eléctrica como quien comparte un pedazo de esperanza. Y recuerdo a muchos—a demasiados—que murieron sin que su nombre contara en una estadística oficial. Más de 4,000 vidas. No fue una cifra. Fue una negligencia.

Pero los nuestros no esperaron permiso para sobrevivir. Rescataron a sus vecinos con sogas y machetes. Improvisaron clínicas. Reabrieron escuelas sin electricidad. María no solo destruyó edificios. Nos robó a abuelas, a padres, a hijos, que murieron no por el viento, sino por el abandono. Y esa es una verdad que debe doler. Que debe incomodar. Porque el olvido también es una forma de violencia.

Tantas conversaciones sobre los problemas que enfrenta Puerto Rico hoy, especialmente en términos de problemas de infraestructura, empiezan con mencionar al huracán María. “Desde María”, dicen. Y creo que, de tanto repetirlo, se nos olvida el dolor. El horror.

Por eso, hoy más que reclamar, quiero recordar. Recordar a los que no vivieron para contar su historia. Recordar a los que sobrevivieron, pero cargan cicatrices invisibles. Recordar lo que el país tuvo que hacer, solo, para poder respirar.

Porque honrar a los que sobrevivieron—y a los que no—exige más que memoria: exige justicia.

Hoy seguimos luchando por reconstruir nuestra red eléctrica, por modernizar nuestra infraestructura, por garantizar servicios de salud resilientes y acceso digno a la vivienda. Seguimos luchando por energía confiable, por justicia social, y por un trato justo ante la ley.

Puerto Rico siguió adelante porque su gente nunca se rindió. Porque en medio del caos, y la oscuridad, fue la solidaridad, el valor y la dignidad del pueblo lo que sostuvo la isla. Esa es la verdad que no se puede ignorar ni borrar. Porque aunque María fue una herida profunda, la respuesta de nuestra gente fue una de fuerza indomable. Y aunque aún estamos sanando, seguimos adelante. Seguimos

adelante, con la mirada puesta en la reconstrucción y en un futuro digno.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Today I stand here with the voice borrowed from a people who do not forget. Eight years ago, on September 20, Puerto Rico woke up torn—not only in terms of its infrastructure but in the very soul of its people. Hurricane María was not just a meteorological event, but an odyssey that painfully reflected the strength of the people of Puerto Rico and what happens when the collapse of infrastructure is combined with years of institutional neglect.

That is why today I am honored to introduce a resolution to commemorate this solemn anniversary—to recognize those we lost, those who endured, and a people who rose with dignity in the face of abandonment.

Roofs collapsed. The lights went out. But perhaps the most painful thing was the silence. Not just the lack of communication, but the absence of an effective response, of coordination, and of urgency. That void felt like the silence inside the eye of the hurricane: a deceptive calm, which does not promise relief, but rather announces that the worst is yet to come.

I remember the elderly carrying buckets of water up steep hills. Mothers lining up for ice to keep insulin cold. Neighbors sharing a generator like someone sharing a piece of hope. And I remember many—too many—who died without their names being counted in an official statistic. More than 4,000 lives. It wasn't a number. It was negligence.

But our people did not wait for permission to survive. They rescued their neighbors with ropes and machetes. They improvised clinics. They reopened schools without electricity. María didn't just destroy buildings. It stole from us grandmothers, parents, children, who died not from the wind, but from abandonment. And that is a truth that should hurt. Which should make us uncomfortable. Because forgetting is also a form of violence.

So many conversations about the problems Puerto Rico faces today, especially in terms of infrastructure problems, begin with mentioning Hurricane María. “From María,” they say. And I think that, by repeating it so often, we forget the pain. The horror.

Therefore, today more than complaining, I want to remember. Remember those who did not live to tell their story. Remember those who survived, but carry invisible scars. Remember what the island had to do, alone, to be able to breathe.

Because honoring those who survived—and those who did not—demands more than memory: it demands justice.

Today we continue fighting to rebuild our electrical grid, to modernize our infrastructure, to guarantee resilient health services and dignified access to housing. We continue to fight for reliable energy, for social justice, and for equal treatment under the law.

Puerto Rico kept going because its people never gave up. Because in the midst of chaos and darkness, it was the solidarity, courage and dignity of the people that sustained the island. That is the truth that cannot be ignored or erased. Because although María was a deep wound, the response of our people was one of unbreakable strength. And although we are still healing, we move forward. We move forward, with our eyes set on reconstruction and a dignified future.