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No. 152

## House of Representatives

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

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
September 17, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT J. WITTMAN 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.

### RECOGNIZING NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

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

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Preparedness Month because when disaster strikes, preparedness is not optional. It is essential.

Since 2004, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has led a national preparedness campaign to improve emergency readiness. From building supply kits to organizing volunteer ef-

forts to raising awareness about emergency alert systems, National Preparedness Month is a reminder that communities can reduce and, in some cases, prevent devastation.

Disasters don't wait for election cycles or budget negotiations. Floods, fires, blizzards, hurricanes, and tornadoes arrive suddenly, shattering lives and testing our Nation's resiliency.

When these moments arrive, FEMA must be ready to act as the lifeline that millions of Americans depend on, especially as these events are becoming more frequent, destructive, and unpredictable.

Last year alone, the United States experienced 27 disasters, costing more than \$1 billion: wildfires in the West, flooding in the South, hurricanes along our coasts, tornadoes in the heartland, and blizzards in the North.

As the ranking member of the Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee, I have seen firsthand the importance of FEMA's work and the pressing need to safeguard its mission.

This National Preparedness Month, the stakes are much higher. At the very moment when Americans need strong, stable leadership in Federal emergency management, some in this Chamber and in the White House are pushing to undermine it.

Let me be clear: Eliminating FEMA, cutting preparedness grants, or hollowing out the Agency's workforce is not just reckless. It is playing politics with people's lives. It leaves families stranded, communities overwhelmed, and local responders without the Federal support they desperately need.

Preparedness begins locally, with families making plans, schools running emergency drills, local and State leaders building resilient infrastructure, and emergency managers issuing alerts for dangerous conditions, but no city, county, or State can manage the full scale of today's disasters alone.

That is why FEMA exists. It is the backbone of our Nation's disaster readiness and a bridge to recovery.

Now is the time to strengthen FEMA, not to dismantle it. FEMA brings the surge capacity, coordination, and resources that no municipality can summon alone. From housing assistance and debris removal to hazard mitigation and long-term rebuilding, FEMA is the connective tissue of our national preparedness.

As Members of Congress, we have a duty to ensure our constituents and the communities we represent never have to wonder whether their Federal Government will be there to support them when disaster strikes.

Disasters do not discriminate between red States and blue States. Preparedness is not partisan. It is a shared responsibility and moral obligation.

This National Preparedness Month, we owe it to every family, first responder, and community to ensure FEMA stands ready to help, respond, recover, and rebuild.

### CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CAUCUS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as the co-chair of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, I am proud to be an advocate for CTE and the work we do to support job training, apprenticeships, and CTE programs.

Skills-based education provides learners of all ages with career-ready skills, giving individuals the tools to succeed and restoring the rungs on the ladder of opportunity.

From agriculture to the arts and from marketing to manufacturing,

□ 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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CTE programs work to develop America's most valuable resource: its people. A highly skilled workforce is important to the success of our American economy.

That is why, together with the CTE Caucus co-chair, Congresswoman BONAMICI, I introduced two bills that increase career counseling for students and adult learners.

The Counseling for Career Choice Act would expand K-12 career counseling services and provide more resources focused on financial literacy, registered apprenticeships, dual enrollment programs, internships, and even financing for college or other postsecondary education.

Career counseling gives students the tools that they need to make well-informed decisions about their futures. When we equip school counselors with the resources necessary, we can help close our Nation's skills gap and let students find the pathway to fulfilling careers.

The Counseling for Career Choice Act ensures that middle and high school students are made fully aware of their career and educational options prior to graduation so that they are aware of all the opportunities before them.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certifications and hands-on skills that they can use right out of high school in skills-based education programs or college.

For adult learners, we introduced the Creating Opportunities to Thrive and Advance Act, or COTA Act for short, to help spread the word about career counseling through public outreach.

COTA amends title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, to bolster career guidance for adults.

For the first time, this bill would allow for public outreach such as public service announcements, social media campaigns, job fairs, and other means to educate the public on workforce development programs.

Mr. Speaker, we must be able to tell the public about the resources available to them. Increasing access to career opportunities is a good investment, and the COTA Act will give individuals the resources they need to take the next step in their careers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support both bills and to join the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus today.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF LLOYD WILLIAMS

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a good friend, Lloyd Williams, president and CEO of The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce and cofounder of HARLEM WEEK.

Lloyd was a dear friend and beloved member of the Harlem community. Through his lifetime of public service, spanning more than 50 years, more than one-half century, Lloyd was dedicated in his unparalleled dedication to fostering economic empowerment, cultural pride, and social equity in the village of Harlem.

□ 1010

Born on January 16, 1945, in Jamaica and immigrated to New York City at the age of 2, where he was raised in Harlem, Lloyd committed a lifetime of service to the advancement and empowerment of the Harlem community. In many ways, Lloyd Williams was Mr. Harlem.

He earned his higher education degree at The City College of New York and developed a lifelong passion for civic engagement, economic development, and cultural preservation.

In 1974, Lloyd Williams, along with Manhattan Borough President Percy E. Sutton, Voza Rivers, and others, co-founded Harlem Week, which was initially designated as a 1-day event to restore community pride, yet it grew into a multi-week cultural festival celebrating Harlem's history, art, music, business, and contributions to society, attracting millions of people annually.

In 1988, Lloyd was appointed president of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, becoming one of the longest serving leaders of this important organization, guiding the Chamber through periods of economic challenges and revitalization over more than four decades.

Under his visionary leadership, the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce expanded its mission to promote minority-owned businesses, attract investment, foster entrepreneurship, and support workforce development initiatives that improve economic opportunities for Harlem's residents.

Lloyd championed key social issues, including affordable housing, education reform, health equity, climate change awareness, and bridging the digital divide, working tirelessly to ensure that Harlem's growth was inclusive and reflective of the need of its diverse population.

Lloyd was a champion of Harlem's cultural institutions and heritage and served as a dedicated mentor, friend, and adviser to many others throughout New York City.

We are all saddened by his passing and will miss him greatly, but we will always and forever remember him and his enduring commitment to civil rights, social justice, and community advocacy.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, Lloyd Williams was my friend. In the political terrain, I believe that he paid for our friendship, but he never backed down. His last message to me, a text message, simply said: Proud.

Well, we are all proud of Lloyd Williams. We will never forget him. His

impact and influence will be remembered across Harlem USA and across the United States of America.

#### RECOGNIZING JEFF WILSON

(Mr. NORMAN of South Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a truly great South Carolinian, Mr. Jeff Wilson. He is an outstanding public servant and beacon of our farming community. As head of Cotton Hills Farm in Lowrys, South Carolina, he recently was named the South Carolina Farmer of the Year for 2025 by the Sunbelt Ag Expo. This distinct honor is for his decades of dedicated service to farming, conservation, and community.

For over 40 years, Jeff Wilson has exemplified the very best of what it means to be a South Carolina farmer. He is hardworking, he is innovative, and he is deeply committed to preserving the land and the legacy of his family.

Cotton Hills Farm has been in the Wilson family since 1882. That is over 143 years ago. Originally starting with only 100 acres gifted to Jeff by his great-grandmother, it now spans over 1,000 acres producing a diverse array of crops.

Jeff's story is one of dedication not only to the land but to the family. After serving our Nation in the Air Force during the Vietnam war, Jeff returned home to carry on the farm. He followed in the footsteps of his father, who took over the farm at the age of 13. Now, four generations later, Jeff farms alongside his sons, Jeb and Pete.

Jeff has truly been an innovator in the agriculture industry. He has upheld sustainable farming practices long before they were commonplace and adopted no-till methods, cover cropping, and efficient underground irrigation to conserve water and to protect the soil. His commitment to conservation has earned him statewide and national recognition, including leadership roles on the soil and water conservation state board and the Southeast Region Hall of Fame award for the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Jeff also works outside the family farm. He and his family operate three retail markets and a GAP-certified packing facility. These bring the fresh, local produce directly to the consumers.

Throughout his life, Jeff has been deeply involved in serving his community. He has served 50 years with the Ruritan Club, 30 years with the Young Farmer and Agribusiness Association, and he is on the Clemson Extension Advisory Committee. He was also awarded County Conservationist of the Year.

Jeff's commitment to education through programs like the annual Farm & Tractor Day and the South Carolina Ag + Art Tour reflect his desire to share the values of agriculture with future generations.