

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER

HON. GREG STANTON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center in Phoenix. The museum is a truly historic site with real significance for Black history in Arizona and the United States.

The building that houses the museum, known today as “The Carver,” is itself a storied symbol of both injustice and perseverance. It first opened in 1926 as the Phoenix Union Colored High School, the only Arizona high school built exclusively to serve Black students during the era of segregation. That difficult history is inseparable from the Carver’s legacy. Today, the site stands as a place dedicated to preserving and retelling Black history.

Any account of Black history in Arizona is incomplete without the Carver. Despite school segregation, the Carver produced graduates who went on to become leaders, public servants, artists, educators, and civil rights advocates. The building is standing proof that talent and hard work are rewarded, even when the opportunity for success was difficult, if not impossible, to come by in a racially segregated world.

The school closed in the 1950s following the desegregation of Phoenix high schools, but the future of the building was uncertain. Alumni and community leaders recognized its historical and cultural importance and mobilized to save it from demolition. In 1996, the site was reborn as the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, ensuring that the legacy of those who studied, taught, and organized there would not be lost.

The Carver Museum today preserves and shares formative chapters of Black history in Arizona through exhibitions, archives, educational programming, and community events. Exhibits share the experiences and contributions of African Americans who helped shape Phoenix and Arizona history.

The importance of the Carver goes beyond historical preservation. The museum is a community gathering place. It is a space for learning and bringing people from different backgrounds and generations together. It is a resource for educators and researchers, a powerful reminder that Black history is not distant or abstract. It is local and lived. The Carver is foundational to the story of Black history in Phoenix and our state. By preserving the past, the museum helps current and future generations of Arizonans become well-rounded, and well-informed civic leaders who are ready to serve our community and make a real difference.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the George Washington Carver

Museum and Cultural Center on its 100th anniversary. May it continue to educate, inspire, and remind us that honoring history is essential to building justice and opportunity for all.

HONORING ARLENE BLAKE, PMP, AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Arlene Blake, PMP, a community visionary, workforce development advocate, and champion for women’s economic advancement in Central Florida. She is the founder of Women on the Rise International, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to building economic mobility for women through financial literacy, career development, entrepreneurship, and personal wellness. Over the past decade, she has transformed Women on the Rise into a career and leadership hub serving hundreds of women across the region.

Arlene’s work focuses on addressing barriers that prevent women from thriving, including childcare, technology gaps, lack of mentorship, and limited access to culturally aligned support networks. In 2024, she secured the organization’s largest program investment to date, expanding a career development initiative that has helped women increase earnings, secure higher-paying jobs, launch small businesses, and gain the financial confidence needed to build long-term stability for themselves and their families.

Her contributions to the community have been recognized widely. Arlene has been featured in the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council’s Legacy of Excellence Exhibit as a Phenomenal Black Woman in Central Florida, named a Rising Star by the Citrus Club, and honored with the Noble Knight Award from the University of Central Florida College of Community and Innovation. She has been recognized by the Orlando Business Journal as both a Woman Who Means Business and one of the Most Influential People in Orlando, and was named Woman of the Year by Orange Appeal Magazine.

Beyond her nonprofit leadership, Arlene is the founder of Just Start It, LLC, where she supports organizations and professionals in improving systems, strengthening performance, and expanding community impact. She remains committed to advancing women’s economic well-being, strengthening families, and ensuring Central Florida remains a region where women can rise, lead, and build lasting legacies.

HONORING BIANCA BELABRE AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Bianca Belabre, a marketer, strategist, and community advocate whose work advances creativity, education, and economic opportunity in Osceola County.

Raised in a Haitian household and influenced by her parents, Gilna Charles and Jean Robert Belabre, Ms. Belabre grew up shaped by immigrants’ pursuit of the American dream, instilling values of resilience and education. From Brooklyn, New York, Ms. Belabre relocated to Osceola County at the age of 13. She attended the Osceola School for the Arts as a vocalist, where she developed an appreciation for creativity and storytelling.

Ms. Belabre is a graduate of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Science as a Bright Futures Scholarship recipient, followed by a Master of Public Health. She serves on the board of the Osceola Chamber of Commerce, chairs the Poinciana Area Council, and is on the board of the Black Empowerment Community Council. Through these roles, she supports community events and business education, and helps fund scholarships for students in Poinciana, awarding \$6,000 in 2025. She also delivers educational presentations for local business groups and nonprofit organizations.

In 2019, Ms. Belabre launched A Creative Station, a marketing agency specializing in digital marketing, strategic planning, and content creation. She supports business owners through training and marketing management. She was contracted by the Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County to launch the Early LearnHub brand and lead the design of an immersive educational mural at the Hart Memorial Library in Kissimmee. Ms. Belabre is also the co-founder of The Boss Collective and The Modern Boss Podcast, supporting more than 100 women entrepreneurs in the surrounding area.

Her leadership has been recognized with the Vanguard Award from the Black Empowerment Community Council and the Tomorrow’s Leaders Today Award from the Osceola Chamber of Commerce.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

HONORING CRAIG MOORE AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Craig Moore. He serves as Chief Executive Officer of AdventHealth Kissimmee, providing executive leadership for one of Osceola County's largest and most vital health care campuses serving residents across Florida's 9th Congressional District. Guided by AdventHealth's faith-based mission to extend the healing ministry of Christ, Moore is committed to ensuring access to compassionate, high-quality, whole-person care for the communities he serves.

Moore brings more than 30 years of experience within AdventHealth, a nonprofit health care system dedicated to caring for the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. He began his career with the organization while still in high school and has since served in a wide range of clinical and operational leadership roles across acute care, home health, outpatient, and hospital operations. Prior to becoming CEO, he served as Chief Operating Officer at AdventHealth Kissimmee, guiding the campus through a period of growth and transformation. Under Moore's leadership, the campus undertook a multiyear expansion totaling more than \$100 million in investment to enhance access and readiness for patients across Osceola County. In addition, these efforts expanded specialty services, enhanced facilities, and added off-site emergency care, while also creating new jobs for local residents. Together, these initiatives contributed to improving patient safety, quality outcomes, and a stronger care experience for families across the county.

Beyond the hospital campus, Moore is actively engaged in the Osceola County community. He serves on the board of the Osceola Council on Aging, supporting programs that promote independence, dignity, and access to services for older adults. He is known for a listening-first leadership approach guided by the principle, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood," emphasizing collaboration with caregivers, physicians, and community partners.

Moore holds bachelor's and master's degrees in physical therapy from Andrews University and an MBA from the University of Central Florida.

HONORING DENIELLE BARNHARDT AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Denielle Barnhardt, a pastor, educator, and arts advocate whose work has significantly impacted families and students throughout Osceola County and Florida's 9th Congressional District.

She is the co-founder and senior pastor of The Way Worship Church, where she leads alongside her husband, Jaquan, with a family-centered pastoral model that views the family as the prototype for the church and community life. Together, they are raising four beautiful children.

In 2013, Barnhardt founded Mrs. B's Music and Performing Arts Training, and since 2017, she has worked intentionally to expand access to high-quality arts education across Osceola and Orange Counties. Through seasons of growth and challenge, including the COVID-19 pandemic, she used the arts to keep families connected, students engaged, and communities resilient. Her efforts have led to the establishment of musical theater programs in schools and community settings, as well as strategic partnerships that connect children to quality arts programs and educational pathways through preparation and mentorship.

Barnhardt has also served as a startup consultant, strategist, and curriculum developer for multiple private and micro-schools in Osceola County, helping to launch and strengthen innovative educational models rooted in excellence and community need. She currently serves as a PAX coordinator, facilitating and overseeing cultural exchange initiatives that promote global understanding among students in the United States and abroad. She recently launched The Hall Institute, a Bible college focused on theological education and leadership formation.

With a background in the arts, Barnhardt received arts education from primary school through high school and has performed on world-renowned stages, including Radio City Music Hall, Broadway, and other major venues. Combined with her foundation in general education and a Master of Divinity in Church History, she bridges creative formation, historical theology, and pastoral leadership with rare interdisciplinary depth.

She will soon step into the Navy Reserve Chaplaincy, expanding her service to support service members and their families, and continuing her commitment to faith, education, and community leadership in Central Florida.

RECOGNIZING REBECCA SAWYER SMITH

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Rebecca Sawyer Smith of Lakewood, Colorado for her 38 years of service within the Department of Veterans Affairs and congratulate her on her retirement.

Rebecca began her federal government career as a graduate student at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., when she joined the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Over the course of nearly four decades, she served in a variety of roles within the VA, including Public Affairs Officer, Coach, and member of the Public Contact Team. Her career took her to communities on both coasts and throughout the central United States before concluding in Lakewood, Colorado, where she retired at the end of 2025.

Throughout her distinguished career, Rebecca dedicated herself to serving those who

have served our country. She worked tirelessly to ensure veterans received the benefits and services they earned, providing both in-person and virtual benefits counseling. She also partnered closely with veteran service organizations and nonprofit groups to help veterans navigate and access the support available to them.

Even in retirement, Rebecca continues her commitment to veterans in her community by volunteering with arts organizations that offer programs for veterans, further demonstrating her lifelong devotion to public service.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to thank Rebecca Sawyer Smith for her 38 years of service with the VA and to congratulate her on her retirement.

HONORING DR. CHUNDRAL. EVENS AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Dr. Chundra L. Evens, a distinguished educational leader, pastor, and community advocate whose career reflects a deep commitment to excellence, service, and transformative leadership.

After serving five years as the principal of Osceola County School for the Arts, she made history in March 2020 as the first African American appointed to the position of Assistant Superintendent in the High School Division of the School District of Osceola County in Kissimmee, Florida. A highly credentialed educator, Dr. Evens is certified in K-12 and holds specialized certifications in Exceptional Student Education, ESOL, Reading, Educational Leadership, and School Principal. Her professional journey is enriched by earlier experience in correctional probation and the performing arts.

She attended Florida A&M University as a member of the Marching 100 and later earned a bachelor's in political science from the University of Central Florida. She completed both her master's and Doctor of Education in educational leadership at National Louis University. Dr. Evens has received numerous prestigious recognitions, including the Harvard University Extension School Strategic Leadership Program and the National Institute for School Leadership Executive Development Program. Her honors include the Florida Department of Education Outstanding Assistant Principal Achievement Award; Secondary Literacy Administrator of the Year; Distinguished Minority Educator of the Year at both St. Cloud Middle and Zenith High; New Beginnings Education Center Teacher of the Year and SAC Distinguished Service Award; Council for Exceptional Children Middle School Teacher of the Year and Outstanding Rookie Teacher of the Year; and the district's Distinguished Minority Runner-Up Educator of the Year. She was also the first principal in the district to achieve Best and Brightest recognition and was named the 2019 Principal of the Year by Osceola Visionaries, Inc.

Guided by her faith and inspired by Nelson Mandela's belief in education as a powerful