

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF OFFICER ELIJAH MONROE GARRETSON

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life, service, and ultimate sacrifice of Officer Elijah Monroe Garretson, a devoted public servant whose courage and commitment left a lasting legacy on the Copperas Cove community and Central Texas.

Officer Garretson lived a life defined by service. He first answered the call to protect others through honorable service in the United States Army, serving from 2017 to 2024 and attaining the rank of Sergeant. His military career reflected discipline, leadership, and an unwavering sense of duty that guided him both in and out of uniform.

Following his military service, Officer Garretson continued his commitment to public service by joining the Copperas Cove Police Department in January 2025. The department sponsored him through the Central Texas College Basic Peace Officer Academy, where he distinguished himself as a top student, graduating with the highest GPA in his class in 2025. He was sworn in as a police officer on June 27, 2025, successfully completed field training, and served on Gold Team Nights with professionalism, integrity, and compassion.

On January 10, 2026, Officer Garretson made the ultimate sacrifice, losing his life in the line of duty while protecting the community he served with honor. Beyond the uniform, Elijah Garretson was a devoted husband, father, son, and brother. He married his wife, Alexis, in July 2025 and was a loving father to his five-year-daughter, Elliana. He was also pursuing college studies in social work, driven by a deep passion for mental health and helping others.

Though his time with the department was far too brief, Officer Garretson's legacy of service, courage, and compassion will endure. We honor his life, grieve his loss, and remain forever grateful for his sacrifice.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARGARET "MIDGE" THOMAS

HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Margaret "Midge" Thomas, a lifelong Rochesterian whose passing is deeply felt throughout our community. Ms. Thomas lived a life defined by service and a steadfast commitment to equality. For over fifty years, she served Rochester as a leader, educator, philanthropist, and advocate, leaving an indelible mark on our city.

Ms. Thomas devoted her life to uplifting others, particularly members of Rochester's Black community. Alongside her husband, Dr. Freddie Thomas, a respected inventor and geneticist at Eastman Kodak Company and the University of Rochester, she mentored countless young people and emerging leaders. Together, they opened their home to students, scientists, historians, and neighbors, creating a welcoming space for learning and connection.

Ms. Thomas was a co-founder of Rochester's chapter of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, an organization dedicated to advancing leadership and economic opportunity through community service and advocacy. As a founding member of the chapter, she played a pivotal role in helping women in Rochester start businesses and advance professionally.

Following the passing of her husband, Ms. Thomas established the Freddie L. Thomas Foundation in his honor, continuing her lifelong commitment to service. Through the foundation, she supported numerous local organizations and initiatives, including its most well-known annual Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners that brought hundreds of Rochester residents together for warm meals and a sense of community during the holiday season.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my sincere condolences to the family of Midge Thomas and to all who had the privilege of knowing her. Through her generosity, leadership, and devotion to her community, she helped shape a stronger Rochester, and her legacy of service will endure as a lasting source of inspiration.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF VAN HIPP

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of Van Hipp of Walterboro whose public service embodies an American Patriot. South Carolinians are grateful to express appreciation for him. I include in the RECORD the following obituary that has been provided by Parker-Rhoden Funeral Home:

VAN HIPP

Surrounded by his devoted family, Van Darrel Hipp, 87 of Walterboro, South Carolina, went home to be with the Lord on Monday, February 16, 2026. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, Van's legacy of service—to his community, country, family and faith—remains as a lasting testament to his character. His keen sense of humor and dry wit will surely induce smiles and laughter among those who knew him best for years to come.

Van was a member of First Baptist Church of Walterboro, and more recently worshiped online at the St. George Methodist Church.

A graveside service officiated by Rev. Joey McDonald of St. George Methodist Church

was held at 10am on Saturday, February 21 at Green Lawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery. Parker-Rhoden Funeral Home of Walterboro is managing arrangements.

Van was born on July 20, 1938, in Hogansville, Georgia to the late Vann Ferrell and Fay Jackson Hipp. He is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Sandra Combs Hipp of Walterboro; an elder son, Van (Jane) Hipp, Jr. of Alexandria, VA; a daughter, Laynie (Hugh) Chinnners of St. George, SC; and a younger son, Duke (Bethany) Hipp of Singapore; nine grandchildren, Trey Hipp, Sarah Camille (Will) Godfrey, Jackson Hipp, Aubrey Chinnners, Nicholas (Chelsea) Chinnners, William Hipp, George Hipp, Charlotte Hipp, and Amelia Hipp; and four great-grandchildren, Liam Godfrey, Philip Godfrey, James Godfrey, and Maddie Chinnners. He is also preceded in death by a 10th grandchild, Hugh Chinnners III.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE REVEREND JESSE LOUIS JACKSON, SR.

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life and legacy of the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr.—a moral giant of the civil rights movement, a champion for the poor and dispossessed, and one of the most gifted communicators in American history.

I also want to express my love and support to Reverend Jackson's family as they grieve such a deeply personal loss, including our colleague Congressman JONATHAN JACKSON, our former colleague Jesse Jackson, Jr. and all the Jackson family members and friends.

Reverend Jackson was born during height of the Jim Crow segregation in Greenville, South Carolina, yet he rose from humble beginnings to become a global voice for justice, equality, and human dignity. He first came to national prominence in the 1960s as a young advocate in the struggle for civil rights and an aide to Dr. King, who appointed him to lead the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Operation Breadbasket in Chicago and eventually, it's national director. Following Dr. King's assassination in 1968, Reverend Jackson helped sustain and lead the movement's moral urgency, shaping a new era of activism grounded in nonviolence, direct action, and an unshakable faith in the power of love.

In 1971, he founded Operation PUSH—"People United to Save Humanity", building an inclusive advocacy movement united in the pursuit of economic and social justice. Reverend Jackson led boycotts against corporations that had poor records in hiring Black employees or contracting with Black businesses. In 1984, he organized the National Rainbow Coalition, bringing to life an organization of voters from a broad spectrum of races and creeds. This helped him launch his historic presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988,

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

when he first won five primaries, and subsequently garnered 6.9 million votes. This transformed American politics, inspiring discouraged Americans to believe in the possibility of a multiracial democracy and helping to expand participation within the Democratic Party. His call to “Keep Hope Alive!” was more than a slogan—it was a moral charge to the Nation and a testament to his belief that love and collective action can bend the arc of history toward justice.

For more than six decades, Reverend Jackson served as both bridge and trailblazer, connecting the civil rights movement of the 1960s to the ongoing struggle for a more inclusive democracy in the 21st century. He marched, organized, led boycotts, negotiated, and preached on behalf of those too often marginalized or ignored, always affirming, “I am somebody.” He mentored and was a friend to many, including me.

Mr. Speaker, Reverend Jesse Jackson was a fearless advocate for love and justice whose voice stirred our conscience and challenged our Nation to live up to its highest ideals. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring his extraordinary life and legacy, and in recommitting ourselves to the future of a Beloved Community that he so faithfully envisioned.

HONORING THE 2025 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS FROM PUERTO RICO

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the outstanding achievements of three students from Puerto Rico who have been selected as 2025 U.S. Presidential Scholars. This prestigious honor, announced on September 26, 2025, by U.S. Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, recognizes only 161 high school seniors nationwide for their accomplishments in academics, the arts, and career and technical education.

It is with great pride that I acknowledge and include in the RECORD the following Presidential Scholars from Puerto Rico:

Lucas J. Mendoza, Dorado—Tasis School in Dorado

Anna Cristina Sgroi Morillo, Carolina—Robinson School

Nicolás Antonio Unanue, San Juan—St. John's School

These students exemplify the highest standards of scholarship, leadership, and service. Their recognition as Presidential Scholars is not only a testament to their academic excellence but also a reflection of their dedication, resilience, and the support of their families, teachers, and communities.

The future of Puerto Rico and of our Nation is strengthened by the promise of young leaders such as Lucas, Anna Cristina, and Nicolás. I am proud to honor their achievements and may their success serve as an inspiration to others.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF OFFICER JOSEPH ADRAGNA, III

HON. CRAIG A. GOLDMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Officer Joseph Adragna, III, who passed away on January 31, 2026, while serving on duty as an officer with the Westover Hills Police Department. Officer Adragna was a devoted husband, loving father, proud veteran, and steadfast public servant. His life reflected the highest ideals of duty, honor, and sacrifice.

Joseph Adragna was a patriot who answered the call to serve his Nation by entering the United States Air Force in 1999. Later, he was honorably discharged as a decorated Aircrew Life Support Journeyman and was recognized as the 2000 Air Mobility Command Outstanding Aircrew Life Support Airman of the Year—an achievement that spoke to his professionalism, discipline, and commitment to excellence.

Following his military service, Adragna continued his dedication to public safety with the Los Angeles Police Department, graduating with the Sworn Officer Class of 2003. Over the course of 22 years, he served with distinction in patrol, vice, undercover operations, and traffic collision investigation. He pursued advanced training, including United States Secret Service Counterterrorism certification and the Jimmy Ryce Law Enforcement Training through the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Even after completing a distinguished career with the Los Angeles Police Department, Adragna chose to continue serving his community as a member of the Westover Hills Police Department. Though his tenure in Fort Worth was brief, his experience, integrity, and leadership left an enduring impression on his fellow officers and the community.

Beyond his uniform, Adragna was a man of deep faith, strong character, and abiding love for his family. I extend my deepest condolences to his devoted wife, Tara Adragna, and his beloved daughter, Marissa Adragna.

On behalf of the 12th Congressional District of Texas, I wish to honor the life and service of Joseph Adragna, III. His life stands as a testament to courage, conviction, and selfless dedication.

RECOGNIZING DEBBIE LECROY

HON. CHUCK EDWARDS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Debbie LeCroy upon her retirement from the Asheville Police Department, following twenty years of distinguished, honorable service to the people of Western North Carolina.

Officer LeCroy began her career in law enforcement with the APD, answering the call to protect and serve her community with integrity and courage. She later continued her service with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office before returning to Asheville to complete her ca-

reer where it first began. Showing testament to her deep-rooted commitment to her hometown and the people she proudly served.

Throughout her career, Officer LeCroy distinguished herself in a wide array of critical roles, including Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer, Detective, Forensics Investigator, and Community Resource Officer. She also served as a member of the Peer Support Team, Crisis Negotiation Team, and Long-Term Drug Investigations Unit. In each assignment, Officer LeCroy demonstrated exceptional professionalism, steady leadership, and an unwavering dedication to justice and public safety. Her versatility and willingness to serve reflects a career defined by excellence and selflessness.

Officer LeCroy is perhaps best known throughout the community as the handler of therapy K-9 Kora. Together, they provided comfort and reassurance to citizens during times of crisis, tragedy, and hardship. Through their work in schools and community events, Officer LeCroy and Kora strengthened trust between law enforcement and the public, offering compassion in moments when it was needed most. Their partnership stands as a powerful example of how service and empathy can foster relationships and healing.

Over the course two decades, Officer LeCroy has mentored fellow officers, supported colleagues through challenging circumstances, and helped shape programs that will continue to benefit the community for years to come. Her legacy is one of dedication, integrity, and service above self.

Today, we honor Officer Debbie LeCroy not only for her years of faithful service, but for the lasting impact she has made on the lives of countless individuals across Western North Carolina. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I extend my deepest gratitude to and I congratulate Officer LeCroy and wish her every success and fulfillment in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING THE WORLD MUSEUM OF MINING IN BUTTE, MONTANA IN CELEBRATION OF AMERICA'S 250TH

HON. RYAN K. ZINKE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 250th year since our Nation's founding by recognizing the legacy of the World Museum of Mining in Butte, Montana.

The World Museum of Mining has been in operation since 1956 and is one of the world's only museums that sits on a former mine. For seven decades, it has preserved and shared the remarkable story of Butte's mining heritage, offering visitors an immersive experience into the lives of the men and women who shaped the American West.

The museum brings history to life with exhibits that put visitors in the shoes of miners during the late 19th and early 20th-century mining boom. This includes exploring “Hell Roarin’ Gulch,” a replica town from the 1890s when Butte was known as the “richest hill on earth.” Guests can step into shops and saloons of the era before heading underground to experience the realities of a miner's daily work.